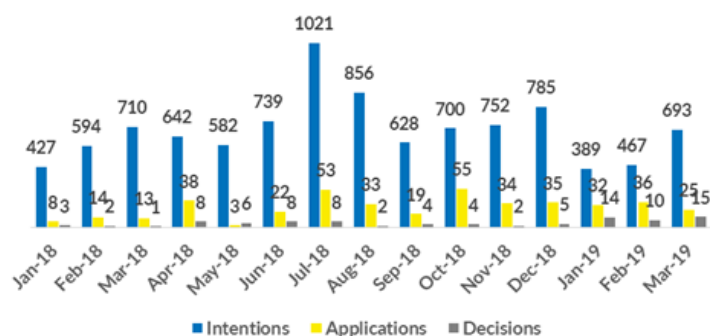


SERBIA UPDATE

- UNHCR welcomed the Asylum Office of the Ministry of Interior ruling on **15 applications for asylum** during March, granting protection to 11 and rejecting four. So far, during the first quarter of 2019, the Asylum Office recognised needs for **international protection of 21 asylum seekers** in Serbia, granting 11 refugee and 10 subsidiary status, compared to total of 25 persons granted protection during the whole of last year. Amongst these refugees, 20 benefitted from legal representation, and three from psychological assessments under the UNHCR project. Also, the Asylum Office requested four Best Interest Determinations for unaccompanied or separated asylum seeking children from guardians under the UNHCR project.

Asylum intentions/applications/decisions



- On 7 March, a man from Algeria, who had been accommodated in a government transit centre in West Serbia, perished in a tragic accident on the Sid train station at Serbia-Croatia border. Attempting to climb a train wagon, he touched the overhead high voltage cables and died on the spot.
- On 12 March, the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs (MoLEVSA), UNHCR and UNICEF organized a **Round Table on the Protection of Unaccompanied and Separated Children in Serbia - A Call for Action**. An unaccompanied refugee child from Iraq joined the Minister, EU Ambassador and UN Representatives to open the roundtable, before international experts from EASO, UNICEF and UNHCR presented good practices and minimum standards for the protection and care of unaccompanied and separated children (UASC). Participants praised achievement made in Serbia so far and recommended the development of a multi-sectoral protocol and a concrete plan of actions to continue improving the response to the specific needs of unaccompanied and separated refugee and migrant children.
- 525 UASC** benefitted from guardianship under the UNHCR project and MOU with MOLEVSA. 433 UASC were accommodated in Asylum Centres and 41 in specialized centres for children and two NGO-run facilities.
- 19-20 March, UNHCR hosted a seminar on **“European Court for Human Rights - Standards of Refugee Protection”** for asylum authorities (Asylum Office, Asylum Commission and Administrative Court) and legal partners, facilitated by an expert on immigration and asylum law specialized in international litigation.
- Film maker Aleksandar Aleksic won the 1st [prize](#) of the annual Dhaka International Inter-University Short Film Festival for his short movie “Anywhere” that was themed on the recent refugee influx to Serbia. On 14 March at a small ceremony in UN House Belgrade, the UNHCR Representative, handed Mr Aleksic the prize.
- A second training of 16 Young Roma UNVs, including **internally displaced persons**, took place in Belgrade on 18-19 March 2019. These trainings are part of the joint UNHCR/UNDP **young Roma social inclusion Project**, aiming at training of young Roma men and women and their subsequent employment in local institutions.
- Continuing implementation of its comprehensive Action Plan for **Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)**, UNHCR conducted focus group discussions to raise awareness on PSEA with residents of centres in Bujanovac, Vranje, Bosilegrad. Obrenovac and Bogovadja.



Opening of the Round Table on the Protection of Unaccompanied and Separated Children in Serbia: A Call for Action

- **182** asylum seekers and refugees benefitted from **substantive protection interventions** by UNHCR and partners that included legal aid (49%), psychosocial support (34%), mediation (11%), and skills training (1%).
- **34** refugees received **Cash Based Incentives** to support their integration.
- UNHCR Serbia donated over **6,000 non-food items** (blankets, clothing, shoes, MREs, bedlinen, hygiene parcels and baby blankets) from its left-over emergency stocks, to Roma IDP children, residents of the five UASC institutions and of hospitals in Tutin and Sjenica.
- UNHCR and OSCE attended the **Regional Housing Programme (RHP)** Coordination meeting which discussed plans for use of newly pledged funds for the RHP, verified beneficiary selection for seven different projects and visited one RHP construction site. UNHCR joined CEB, OSCE and construction companies in a meeting in Novi Sad, to discuss RHP implementation in Vojvodina.
- In March UNHCR and partners noted a **more than double increase in the number of newly arriving refugees and migrants**, identifying 1,760 – compared to 819 during February. Most were from Afghanistan (36%, down from 50%), or Pakistan (31%, up from 12%), followed by Bangladesh (8%), Syria (5%), and various of countries of origin (20%). 76% were adult men, only 2% adult women, while 20% were children, including 236 UASC. 79% of the observed/assisted new arrivals entered Serbia from North Macedonia (up from 52%), 9 % from Bulgaria (down from 23%), 7 % from Albania (down from 11%) and only 1% by air (down from 4%).
- At the end of March, 4,202 new refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants were counted in Serbia – compared to 4,330 a month ago. 3,625 were accommodated in 16 Asylum (AC) or Reception/Transit (RTC) Centres. Three centres in the West and North (Principovac, Adasevci and Kikinda) were crowded with single migrant men. The number of refugees/migrants observed outside centres rose to 570: 300 in Belgrade City and 270 camping close to borders with Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina or Hungary.
- UNHCR and partners also received **highly increased** numbers of reports of **collective expulsions**, 717 in March compared to 416 in February: 374 from Croatia (up from 260 last month), 62 from Romania (from 69), 155 from Hungary (from 79) and 126 from BiH (from 8). 80% of these reports alleged denial of access to asylum procedures and 59% mistreatment by authorities of these neighbouring countries.
- UNHCR Serbia compiled and issued the March [Statistical Snapshot](#), new [Fact Sheet](#) and [March site profile](#).

Special thanks to major donors of unearmarked contributions- 2019¹ | USD

Sweden 90.4 million | Norway 44.5 million | Netherlands 37.5 million| United Kingdom 31.7 million| Germany 26.7 million| Denmark 24.4 million
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Germany 56.6 million| United States of America 4.8 million| Sweden 3.3 million

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¹ Contributed without restrictions on its use, unearmarked funding allows UNHCR critical flexibility in how best to reach refugees and other populations of concern who are in the greatest need and at the greatest risk. Where a donor has contribution \$10 million or more, the total amount of the contribution is shown.

² Due to their earmarking at the region or sub-region, or to a related situation or theme, the other softly earmarked contributions listed are those which can potentially be used for Bosnia and Herzegovina Regional Office. Where a donor has contributed \$2 million or more, the total amount of the contributions is shown.