



# MONTHLY UPDATE

May-June 2023

The Belgrade Tower displaying the *Hope Away from Home* video on occasion of World Refugee Day 20 June 2023

## KEY FIGURES

More details: UNHCR Operational Data Portal [South Eastern Europe Situation](#)

**17,589**

New arrivals in governmental centres in May-June 2023<sup>1</sup>

**2,752**

Persons accommodated in governmental centres

**128**

Applications for asylum in first half of 2023, of which 36 in May-June 2023

**6**

Positive decisions by the Asylum Office in the first half of 2023, of which 0 in May-June 2023

**1,313**

Persons fleeing Ukraine received Temporary Protection (TP) in Serbia since 24 Feb 2022, incl. 56 in May-June 2023

**UNHCR Serbia is grateful for the excellent cooperation of 10 partners under Project Partnership Agreements in 2023:**



INITIATIVE FOR  
ECONOMIC AND  
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CRISIS  
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Belgrade Centre for Human Rights

DRS DANISH  
REFUGEE  
COUNCIL



INDIGO



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<sup>1</sup> Sources: SCRM (arrivals & presence); Ministry of Interior (asylum)

## RECENT HIGHLIGHTS

- The Government of Serbia adopted the "Migration Profile" for 2022, published by the Serbian Commissariat for Refugees and Migration (SCRM).

## UNHCR RESPONSE

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**3,475**

Persons counselled on asylum in Serbia

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**394**

Benefitted from cultural mediation

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**86**

Persons received free legal aid/representation in asylum and akin procedures

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**35**

Persons supported through cash-for-protection

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**350**

Asylum-seekers & refugees supported in local inclusion & integration

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**10**

Survivors of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) supported through counselling/legal aid/referral to state bodies

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**572**

Persons received psychological/psychiatric/psychosocial support

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**646**

Persons counselled/supported in registering births, obtaining personal documents and accessing socio-economic rights

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**33**

Persons had their Serbian nationality granted/confirmed (73 in total in 2023)

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**172**

Refugee and IDP children were supported in school attendance and performance

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**60**

Pupils from vulnerable groups received information and support in combatting risks of child, early and forced marriages (CEFM)

## WORLD REFUGEE DAY 2023

- The marking of the 2023 World Refugee Day (WRD) in Serbia began on 15 June and lasted till 23 June, with a series of events organised by UNHCR and its partners. The central event took place in Belgrade - an exhibition of artwork of refugee students and their peers from the Faculty of Applied Arts – enjoyed by government counterparts, the diplomatic corps, the United Nations Country Team, the (I)NGOs, the academia, the private companies partnering in the UNHCR initiative "Refugee Network" and the refugees themselves. This event was jointly organised by the UNHCR and the SCRM. Serbia's Refugee Commissioner Nataša Stanisavljević took the floor jointly with the UNHCR Representative and the Vice-Governor of Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB) Tomáš Boček, considering the joint involvement with the Regional Housing Programme.
- The Belgrade Waterfront Tower displayed a tailor-made video carrying the refugee visuals and the message **Hope Away from Home** and the central Belgrade Slavija Square fountain was lit up in UNHCR-blue. WRD events took place in Užice, Bujanovac, Preševo, Vranje, Sombor, Novi Sad and Belgrade, in the presence of refugees and their peers, local authorities and communities who demonstrated their support to refugee integration.

## Change of Narrative – from transit to host country

- In two years of the duration of the programme, almost 100 undergraduate and master's students of the Faculty of Philology at the University of Belgrade have undergone training in cultural mediation (CM) implemented by CRPC and supported by UNHCR. In addition, on 1 June the CRPC distributed the **Handbook on Cultural Mediation for Students**, developed with the support of SlovakAid and Slovak Embassy in Serbia. UNHCR hopes that Cultural Mediation becomes one of the accredited Masters Programmes in the Faculty of Philology.
- On 22 June, UNHCR organized a Seminar on International standards in the field of refugee law and asylum procedure for judges and judicial associates of the Administrative Court in Belgrade. UNHCR Representative and the President of the Administrative Court addressed the audience, followed by presentations made by Professors Ivana Krstić and Bojana Čučković from the Belgrade Law faculty, as well as Professor Boštjan Zalar, Judge of the Higher Administrative Court of Slovenia and an ad hoc judge of the

European Court for Human Rights.

- On 29 June, UNHCR and Belgrade Centre for Human Rights (BCHR) delivered a seminar at the Faculty of Political Science of Belgrade University entitled **Protection of Ukrainian Refugees from the perspective of international humanitarian, human rights, and refugee law**. The seminar served the purpose of broadening the students' knowledge of refugee protection, especially in the context of the Ukraine emergency.

## UNHCR and IKEA launch a company network #ForRefugees

- On 1 June, UNHCR organised the first of a series of conferences on **The Role of Private Sector in Refugee Integration**. The concept and the modalities of assisting the refugees and asylum-seekers were presented to more than 30 representatives of retail, consulting, catering, and other industries. **Eight companies and business associations - IKEA, CCI France-Serbia, Mona Hospitality Network, Mercator, Impact Hub Belgrade, Inditex, Qonnexa and Women on the Way - joined the #ForRefugees network**. Interested companies may join in the network at the following [LINK](#). According to UNHCR data, the most pressing needs of the refugees and asylum-seekers in Serbia are dignified employment and health care.

## Durable solutions and opportunities for education & employment

- A total of 146 new apartments were handed over to refugees from former Yugoslav republics in May-June, located in Vrnjačka banja, Aranđelovac, Vrbas and Novi Sad, in the scope of the **Regional Housing Programme (RHP)**, Sub-Projects 8 and 9. With the RHP drawing to its official closure, the last RHP coordination meeting took place in Belgrade on 9 June. RHP teams from SCRM, OSCE and UNHCR concluded that the RHP beneficiary selection in Serbia is finished. With 73 flats purchased in Belgrade in June, the RHP reached a figure of 7,497 households/refugee families being provided with a housing solution in Serbia under RHP.
- Partner Danish Refugees Council (DRC) organised two return-related meetings in Kragujevac and Belgrade, with the total of 25 internally displaced persons (IDPs) participating. Seven IDP families with 16 members were registered to return to Kosovo<sup>2</sup> on this occasion.
- Improving refugees' access to education and employment in the Republic of Serbia** is one of the goals of the Memorandum of Understanding between UNHCR and the [Qualifications Agency](#). An informative session, which had the same working title, took place on 11 May and aimed at strengthening the capacities of signatory institutions and partner organizations' staff. Participants used the opportunity to exchange opinions and offer solutions to the problems of integration of refugees, their education and employment in Serbia.
- The third annual cycle of UNHCR/IKEA initiative **Skills for Employment** - a three-month long paid internship that may lead to full-time employment with IKEA Serbia - began in June, for 12 selected refugees.
- Two Ukrainian refugee women opened their own business - a sewing shop - in Vranje in May, with support from UNHCR and the local partner Sigma plus and the local authorities.
- Following the initiative by partner A11 Initiative, Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs made amendments to the Rulebook on forms for the procedure of accessing financial social assistance. As a result, this bylaw now aligns with the Law governing engagement in seasonal jobs, whereby income from seasonal jobs will no longer be counted as earnings in terms of determining the eligibility for the displaced persons to receive social assistance.

## #IBelong – final steps towards eradicating risk of statelessness before end-2024

- UNHCR released a [video](#), featuring the Roma activist and performer [Zejna](#), which contributes to the efforts aimed at eradicating statelessness in Serbia by the end of the #IBelong campaign.
- On 30 May, Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government, in cooperation with the Ombudsman, the City of Niš and the UNHCR, held an information campaign for representatives of the Roma community in Niš, providing them with guidance on how to be entered in the registry of births, to obtain personal documents and access socio-economic rights.
- In June, UNHCR partner Praxis initiated a mapping activity to gather quantitative data on persons at risk of statelessness in Serbia. The mapping will be conducted in 24 municipalities, covering at least 110 Roma settlements, with the help of trained Roma associates.

## Community Initiatives

- A joint fundraising action of Belgrade Marathon, the UN Resident Coordinator Office (RCO) and the UNHCR resulted in a **donation to the House of Opportunities run by Centar Zvezda in Belgrade**, which provides temporary home for young adults leaving centres for unaccompanied minors and fostering arrangements.
- On 23 May, the UNHCR, its partner Crisis Response and Policy Centre (CRPC) and the School of Hospitality and Tourism in Belgrade organised the traditional **#DeliMonday** in KC GRAD in Belgrade, showcasing the complementarity of cultures and the culinary delights of Serbian cuisine and those of Ukrainian refugees residing in Serbia. **The next Deli Monday will take place on 25 September in KC GRAD. Invitations will follow.**

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<sup>2</sup> All reference to Kosovo should be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244.

Join the Network of companies  
*#ForRefugees*



**UNHCR is grateful for contributions directly to Serbia operation, as well as for the support from donors of unearmarked, softly earmarked, and earmarked funding.**