



KEY FIGURES

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

13,571

New arrivals in governmental centres in July 2023¹

3,113

Persons accommodated in governmental centres

134

Applications for asylum thus far in 2023, of which **6** in July 2023

8

Positive decisions by the Asylum Office in the first half of 2023, of which **2** in July 2023

1,340

Persons fleeing Ukraine received Temporary Protection (TP) in Serbia since 24 Feb 2022, incl. **27** in July 2023

UNHCR Serbia is grateful for the excellent cooperation of 9 partners under current Project Partnership Agreements in 2023:



INITIATIVE FOR
ECONOMIC AND
SOCIAL RIGHTS



CRISIS
RESPONSE
AND POLICY
CENTRE



Beogradski centar
za ljudska prava

DANISH
REFUGEE
COUNCIL



DEAS Centar za
istraživanje i
razvoj društva

INDIGO

P R A X I S



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¹ Sources: SCRM (arrivals & presence); Ministry of Interior (asylum)

RECENT HIGHLIGHTS

- Government of Serbia adopted the **Law on Amendments to the LAW ON FOREIGNERS and Law on Amendments to the LAW ON EMPLOYMENT OF FOREIGNERS**, both relevant for asylum-seekers and refugees. According to the changes in the Law on Foreigners, permanent residence in Serbia will be granted to a person who has resided in Serbia continuously for more than three years based on granted international protection. According to relevant changes in the Law on Employment of Foreigners, asylum-seekers will acquire the right to work in Serbia after six months following their application for asylum, instead of nine months as was previously the case, and this right will be automatic without needing to take out an actual work permit which had financial repercussions. Recognised refugees now have an automated right to work on par with the citizens of Serbia. These relevant amendments enter into force on 4 August 2023.

UNHCR RESPONSE

2,830

Persons counselled on asylum in Serbia

416

Benefitted from cultural mediation

38

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

28

Persons supported through cash-for-protection

24

Asylum-seekers & refugees supported in local inclusion & integration

8

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

228

Persons received psychological/psychiatric/psychosocial support

270

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

18

Persons had their Serbian nationality granted/confirmed (91 in total in 2023)

46

Refugee and IDP children were supported in school attendance and performance

UNHCR and the Governments of Italy & Serbia Conclude a Project on Asylum-Building

- The project *Exchange of Experiences and Good Practices on Provision of International Protection and Asylum between the Authorities of Italy and Serbia*, co-funded by the Embassy of the Republic of Italy in Serbia and implemented by UNHCR Country Representations in Belgrade and Rome, which began in November 2021, completed in July 2023 with a [study visit of eight Serbian asylum experts from the Ministry of Interior, the Administrative Court and the Serbian Commissariat for Refugees and Migration \(SCRM\) to Italy](#) where they exchanged experiences and best practices in areas of reception and asylum. UNHCR hopes that this example of successful cooperation in asylum and protection sensitive border management systems will be continued.

UNHCR and Faculty of Law Deepen Cooperation

- On 14 July, UNHCR Representative signed another, [second MoU with the Law Faculty of University in Belgrade](#) represented by the Dean prof. Zoran Mirković. The objective of this MoU is to formalize cooperation between the UNHCR and the Faculty of Law on promotion of refugee protection, including through the Sérgio Vieira de Mello Chairs project, on improving knowledge and understanding of refugee law among students, academics and professionals and on providing opportunities for academic exchange and engagement with the Institute for Legal and Social Sciences of the University of Belgrade and its Human Rights Centre established within the Law Faculty. The MoU also appoints the Law Professor Ivana Krstić as a De Mello Chair (the second member of this initiative from Europe). In line with the Global Refugee Forum (GRF) pledge made by the Faculty of Law, refugee law will be established as a separate subject in the final (forth) year of the studies in the faculty.

Durable Solutions and Opportunities for Education & Employment

- In July, [young Karim](#) became the fifth refugee student who enrolled into a tertiary education institution in Serbia - School of Applied Health Sciences. His dedication and courage also earned him a scholarship from the DAFI (Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative) programme. Support to educational inclusion remains one of the focus areas of UNHCR in Serbia.
- Two refugee families – originating from Burundi and DR Congo, were reunited with family members asylum-seekers in Serbia in July.
- As a result of partnership between UNHCR and the Impact Hub Belgrade, member of [#ForRefugees network](#), five LGBTIQ+ refugees undertook a five-day training in entrepreneurial skills. Impact Hub and Mercator, hotel Hilton, hotel Mona and Beorol companies are in the process of hiring another five refugees.
- Following the first testing session organized by partner Belgrade Centre for Human Rights (BCHR), Arabic-speaking refugees and asylum-seekers commended the concept and the rollout of an Android-based [application for learning Serbian Language](#), created by Serbian high school students within the “[In their sneakers](#)” project supported by UNHCR. The application will be further devised in applicable languages based on user feedback.

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

- UNHCR partner Praxis started the implementation of mapping activities of persons at risk of statelessness in Serbia within the project *Legal assistance to persons at risk of statelessness in Serbia*, and in the framework of the global #IBelong campaign. In Serbia, members of the Roma national minority are most likely to be at risk of statelessness. Previous research from October 2020 revealed 253 persons whose births were not officially registered. In this research cycle, Roma activists and Praxis staff will map persons at risk of statelessness (all those who are not registered in the birth register, do not have citizenship, do not have registered residence or an identity card) in more than 30 municipalities/cities in Serbia which host some 110 (informal) Roma settlements, until November 2023. UNHCR and Praxis will provide all the newly identified persons at risk with free legal aid and legal representation. [Rominfomedia](#) and other [digital platforms](#) are being used to inform the Roma population of this action and encourage them to come forward and access their civic rights through registration.
- On 10 July, UNHCR Representative met with the Ombudsman of Serbia Mr. Zoran Pašalić and agreed that this institution would contribute to the ongoing work on combatting the risk of statelessness in Serbia and the work on asylum system betterment, particularly when it comes to enhancing the form and acceptance rates of ID Cards issued to asylum-seekers and refugees in Serbia.

Community Initiatives

- UNHCR partner Sigma Plus facilitated the participation of 10 refugees accommodated in Bosilegrad Reception Centre and one local resident in three soccer matches played within the [Bosilegrad Sport Summer Festival](#). New friendships were coined, and the refugees felt a sense of being welcome.
- Under the framework of the **SIKA Programme (Introduction to Serbian History, Culture and Constitution Programme)**, implemented by partner Crisis Response and Policy Centre (CRPC) for the second year in a row, on the last weekend of July, a group of 12 recognised refugees enjoyed a guided tour of the Ethnographic and the National Museums in Belgrade, as well as lectures in Serbian History, Geography and Constitution, with the focus on human rights. These events were followed by joint dinners, providing for opportunities for further socializing and exchanges.
- Similarly, UNHCR organized the third **Chit Chat Club** monthly session in Belgrade, with participation of refugees and asylum-seekers from Burundi, Ukraine, and Iran, who had the opportunity to practice their Serbian and learn about Slava - a celebration of families' patron saint day, inscribed in the UNESCO intangible cultural heritage list. Refugees in turn presented their traditions, such as Nowruz, borscht cooking, Petrykivka decorative painting and ritual dance of the royal drum, sparking a lively exchange amongst them. The event was facilitated by a CRPC cultural mediator.

INVITATIONS

- *Day of Banica* culinary event will take place in Bela Palanka on 13 August, with participation of Ukrainian refugees who will present their cuisine.
- *Days of Vranje* festival takes place on 26-30 August in Vranje, and Ukrainian refugees will be presenting their traditional handicrafts, produced in Sigma Plus-supported workshops, in a selling exhibition.



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