

## KEY FIGURES

1 January 2015 - 11 February 2016

**465,463**

Registered intentions to apply for asylum

**31%**

of registered intentions were expressed by children

**2,109**

Applications for asylum

**81%**

of asylum applications were from the top ten refugee-producing countries

**2**

Persons granted refugee status

5 – 11 February 2016

**17,084**

Registered intentions to seek asylum

**26**

Applications for asylum

**4,299**

Persons provided first aid

**807**

Medical assistance to children

**15,346**

Food packages distributed

**5,154**

Pieces of clothing distributed

## 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

5 – 11 February 2016

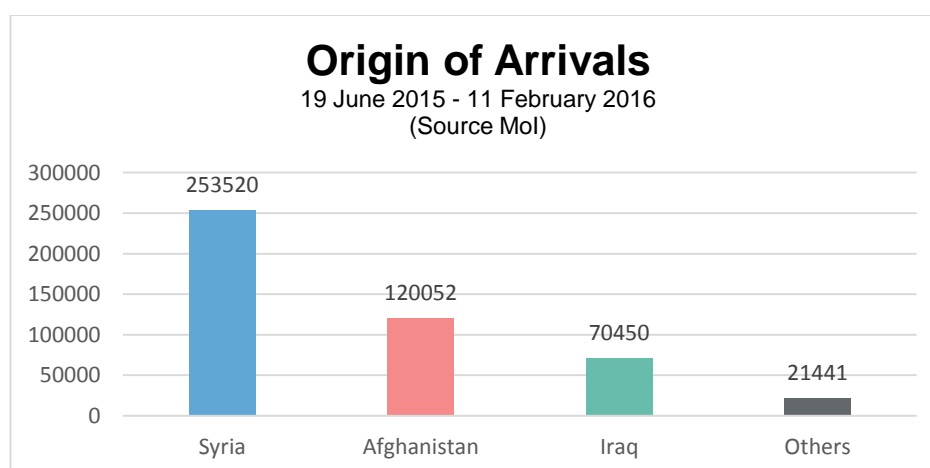
#### HIGHLIGHTS

- 17,084 refugees and migrants crossed the border into FYR Macedonia from 5 – 11 February 2016, with a daily average of 2,441. Since UNHCR began monitoring departures from Gevgelija on 1 July 2015 some **766,057** refugees and migrants have departed.
- In the period from 5 – 11 February 2016, 26 applications for asylum were filed, while from 1 January 2015 to 11 February 2016, 2,109 asylum applications were submitted out of which 1,012 (49%) were submitted by Syrians, 395 (20%) by Afghans, and 176 (8.4%) by Iraqis. So far only 2 persons have been recognised as refugees in 2015-2016, both unaccompanied children, one from Iraq and one from Syria.
- For the period 1 January – 11 February total of 213 applications, out of which 37 were submitted by Afghans, 15 by Syrians, and 4 by Iraqis.
- During the reporting period, 161 people were returned from Vinojug transit centre, on the southern border of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to the Greek border for possessing forged documents, no documents, or for being nationals of countries other than Afghanistan, Iraq, or Syria.
- On 5 February the FYR Macedonia Army started building a second metal fence on the border crossing with Greece five meters from the first fence.
- The Czech police arrived on 6 February to assist FYR Macedonia border police.
- A statement from the Croatian Ministry of Interior's spokesperson was published in Dvenik on 10 February asserting: "It is not true that the Slavonki Brod camp will be closed. The plan for registration to take place only on the Macedonian border will still be discussed. These are possible solutions, and the issues will be solved as the situation develops." As far as the proposal that was discussed to take refugees from Gevgelija directly to Austria, FYR Macedonia Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nikola Poposki, said that he cannot speak to this issue which depends on several countries and that such a measure has not been agreed upon.

## UPDATE ON ACHIEVEMENTS

### Operational Context

17,084 refugees and migrants crossed the border into fYR Macedonia during the reporting period 5 – 11 February 2016, with a daily average of 2,441. Since UNHCR began monitoring the departures from Gevgelija on 1 July 2015 some **766,057** refugees and migrants have departed.



The Ministry of Interior's statistics of refugees and migrants declaring their intention to apply for asylum reached 465,463 including 144,759 (31%) children, of whom 18,300 (4% of children) were registered as unaccompanied since 19 June 2015 until 11 February 2016. Of these 255,350 (54%) of the arrivals are Syrians, 121,274 (26%) Afghans, 71,338 (15%) Iraqis, and the remaining (5%) represent other nationalities such as Iranians, Palestinians, Pakistanis, Somalis, Congolese and Bangladeshi.

### Achievements



#### Protection

#### Achievements and Impact

- A new interview form for Unaccompanied and Separated Children (UASC) was adopted by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MLSP) in Vinojug. The new interview form was proposed by UNHCR in consultation with child protection partners working in the reception centre.
- During the Protection Coordination meeting on 11 February, UNHCR presented statistics and analysis on Unaccompanied and Separated Children reflecting data collected through 358 interviews with UASC conducted in Vinojug and Tabanovce between 18 December 2015 and 8 February 2016 (please refer to attached UNHCR Skopje Update on Unaccompanied and Separated Children).
- An ICRC Delegation composed of the Head of the ICRC Restoring Family Links & Missing Persons division in Geneva, the Transregional Coordinator for Restoring Family Links & Missing persons in Belgrade, the ICRC Protection Delegate in Belgrade and the ICRC RFL Program Officer in Belgrade visited Vinojug on 10 February. The Delegation informed that ICRC will conduct a 3-month assessment on protection needs and gaps in 6 countries along the Balkans route. They also shared that ICRC will open a mission in Athens soon. ICRC's aim is to implement a coherent common RFL

(Restoring Family Links) strategy all along the route. They were briefed by UNHCR together with MYLA and La Strada, namely on the situation of Unaccompanied and Separated Children.

- On 10 February UNHCR attended the regular multi-agency coordination working group meeting organised by the Ministry of Health and supported by UNFPA to further discuss issues related to SGBV in the emergency context. The Working Group also addressed forthcoming activities related to finalising the draft SOPs on processing SGBV survivors and sensitising service providers in both transit centres on vulnerabilities and risk factors focusing on prevention, outreach, first aid including safety, health, and well-being. The follow-up activities will be supported by UNHCR and UNFPA. In addition to the existing member, the Working Group was expanded to representatives of the Ministry of Justice, Public Prosecutor's Office and Medical Examiners to offer their expertise in the finalisation process.
- The Child and Family Protection Support Hub (CFPSH) container in Vojug transit centre has been modified to better cater to its function. The final location of the container is yet to be determined following changes in registration procedure in the centre.
- From 5 – 11 February 2016, approximately 4,139 children and 2,165 women were provided with support, including emotional and psychosocial assistance, in the UNICEF Child Friendly Space operated by the NGO La Strada in Vojug. La Strada identified and assisted 285 vulnerable individuals. In Tabanovce La Strada assisted and supported approximately 1,333 children and 2,920 women. The activities are funded by UNICEF, UNHCR, GIZ, The Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Save the Children and Terre des Hommes.
- From 5 – 11 February 2016, Approximately 1,794 children and 1,043 women were provided with support, including emotional and psychosocial assistance in the Child Friendly Space operated by the SOS Children's Village in Tabanovce. Additionally, 37 pregnant women identified and assisted. The activities are funded by the SOS Kinderdorf International and UNICEF.
- During the reporting period 323 refugee group leaders, representing 16,321 refugees were given information about their rights and obligations in FYR Macedonia at the Vojug site by the Macedonia Young Lawyers Association (MYLA), who also assisted 26 asylum seekers at the Vizbegovo Reception Center with their asylum procedure. MYLA also ensured prioritisation in 51 cases, around 74 vulnerable individuals for their registration in Vojug. MYLA's data entry clerks assisted the Border Police in issuing 17,086 intentions for asylum during the reporting period.
- In addition to having a 24/7 hour presence in Vojug, MYLA is also present 24/7 at the TC Tabanovce. As in Vojug, MYLA provides legal aid and information, with a special focus of unaccompanied children, Extremely Vulnerable Individuals (EVI), and persons that have problems with their documents or who have not been registered.
- During the reporting period, in close coordination with UNHCR, the Red Cross, DRC and La Strada staff in Tabanovce, 63 EVIs and 221 members of their families/groups were transported by Mercy Corps from Tabanovce transit centre to border with Serbia, and referred to the MSF and DRC teams to be picked up at the border, and to the Mercy Corps team at Miratovac RAP. The Mercy Corps Tabanovce team has been supported by two volunteers of Operation Mercy, experienced in emergency work and work with EVIs.
- Site Visits:
  - On 5 February, an Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) team went to Tabanovce and met with the Crisis Management Centre site manager.
  - On 8 February, members of the European Parliament visited Vojug reception centre. They were accompanied and briefed by the UNHCR team with regard to the procedures in the site and the work that UNHCR is performing with all partners in order to provide protection and assistance to the refugees. After the visit, they departed towards Eidomeni. On 9 February, one of the Members of Parliament went to Tabanovce and was briefed on the latest developments.

- The President of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia visited the Vinojug reception centre for the second time on 9 February. He met with representatives from UNHCR and the Red Cross. He also spoke shortly with several refugees regarding the conditions in the reception centre and the services provided. At the end of his visit, he thanked UNHCR for the support provided in dealing with the refugee crisis.
- Also, on 9 February, Representatives from the Western Balkans Department/British Embassy Delegation visited the Vinojug site. They met briefly with representatives from UNHCR and were informed about the work of UNHCR and its partners. They also visited the border and met with representatives from MOI.
- On 10 February, UNICEF met with representatives of the START Network (a rapid funding mechanism for medium scale emergencies) in Vinojug transit centre and provided them with some general background information on the developments in the Vinojug transit centre and available child-focused services as well as highlighted some of the challenges and risks faced by children and their families as they travel from their country of origin to their final destination country.
- On 10 February, a member of the Czech Parliament visited the Vinojug reception centre and was briefed about the general situation concerning the refugee flow.
- A former Minister of Interior, Mr. Pavle Trajanov, currently an MP, visited RC Vinojug and was briefed by UNHCR on 11 February.



The President of FYR Macedonia, Gjorge Ivanov's to the Vinojug reception center.  
©UNHCR, Gevgelija (FYR Macedonia), 9 February 2016

### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- For Palestinians who were residing in Syria, FYR Macedonian police is now requiring that this be specified on the Greek registration document (Palestinian/Syrian). During the reporting period a few cases were returned to Greece to have their registration documents amended.
- Further training is needed for the social workers responsible for interviewing UASC to be able to determine appropriate status (unaccompanied or separated children) and follow-up steps.
- On 6 February, the Chief of Police informed that refugees would only be transported by train from then on, and that the authorities would deal with any strikes as they occurred. On 7 February, taxi drivers threatened to block the railway again. Riot police were deployed along the railway tracks before the entrance to the Vinojug reception centre to stop taxi drivers from blocking the train tracks. During the regular humanitarian coordination meeting which took place on 8 February in Vinojug, the Crisis Management Centre reiterated that the only means of transportation for refugees would be the train. Taxi and private bus drivers blocked the regular border crossing with Greece at Bogorodica as a sign of revolt against the decision.
- During the reporting period there were reports that the train was overloaded, with those already on board locked in while the boarding continued for several hours.
- During the period there was still no agreed procedure for the transportation of undocumented and other individuals from Tabanovce to Gevgelija who expressed their interest to return to Greece. In the meantime, the railway company did not accept to take them back to Gevgelija by train unless they are granted authorisation from the Ministry of Interior.
- On 11 February, UNHCR Greece referred a group of around 30 persons to UNHCR in Vinojug who were not allowed to cross into FYR Macedonia because of problems with their documents. The Border Police Commander in Vinojug informed UNHCR staff that a meeting was held with their Greek counterparts to discuss the concerned documents as they were photocopies but had original police stamps on them. He also mentioned that the FYR Macedonian police would make it a policy not to accept anything other than completely original documents. UNHCR Greece colleagues explained that photocopied documents with stamps are issued by Greek police for people who lose their documents.



## Health

### Achievements and Impact

- During the reporting period the Red Cross assisted 10,742 individuals, out of which 205 were pregnant women and 807 were children. 4,299 persons received first aid. The Red Cross is working in shifts to provide medical assistance and first aid in Gevgelija and Tabanovce 24/7. This activity is funded by UNHCR and the Red Cross.
- On 5 February, a UNHCR Senior Public Health Officer from Geneva went to the Vinojug site and was briefed by the Red Cross about the medical assistance provided to refugees, referrals to the MoH ambulance and other medical interventions. The Public Health delegation then proceeded to Idomeni in Greece.
- UNFPA through its partner, the Red Cross, distributed 66 hand disinfectants.

### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

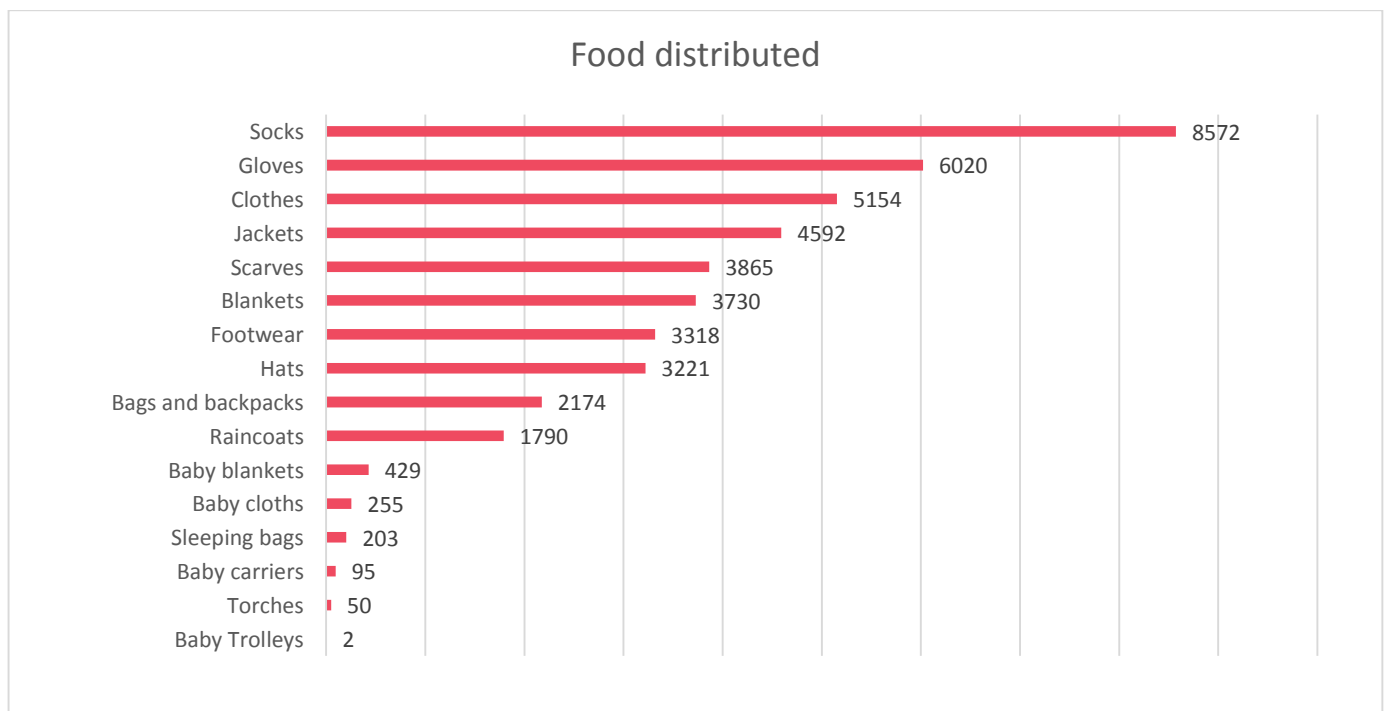
- In Tabanovce an increased number of refugees arriving by taxi were tired and had cold symptoms.



## Food Security and Nutrition

### Achievements and Impact

- Legis, Nun, Kalliri, Agape, Dorcas, La Strada, Help the Refugee in Macedonia, Caritas, UNHCR, UNFPA and Red Cross distributed:

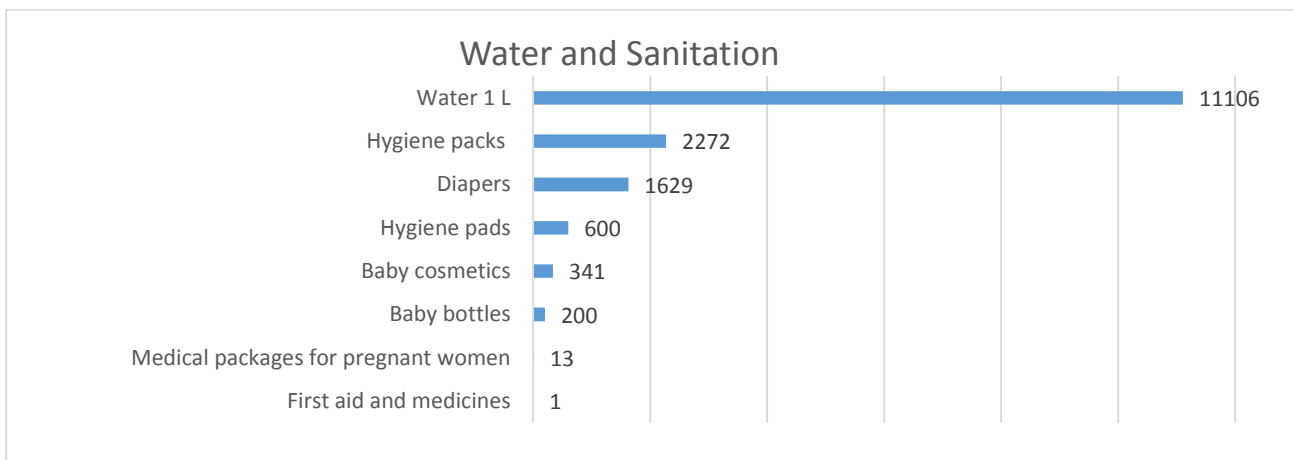


- The baby food that is distributed in the child-friendly spaces in Gevgelija and Tabanovce is funded by UNICEF and SOS Children's Village.

## Water and Sanitation

### Achievements and Impact

- Red Cross, Help the Refugees in Macedonia, La Strada, UNFPA and other NGOs distributed:



### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- A local state owned company took over waste disposal in Tabanovce; however, they did not show up on site for some time so a large amount of garbage accumulated in the site, especially in the area around and in front of the Rub halls. On 6 February, upon the request of MLSP the company started collecting and disposing of the waste in the afternoon.

## Communication and Information

### Achievements and Impact



Information and Advice Desk in Vinojug reception centre. ©UNHCR Gevgelija (FYR Macedonia) February 2016

- The UNHCR Emergency Lab/UNHCR Innovation Unit team focusing on Communicating with Communities (CwC) returned to FYR Macedonia to continue supporting the projects being piloted in the country, including to test the Google Translation Cards mobile app with UNHCR staff and refugees, to set up additional TV screens and development of content, and to support the development of SOPs for the Information and Advice Desk (IAD).

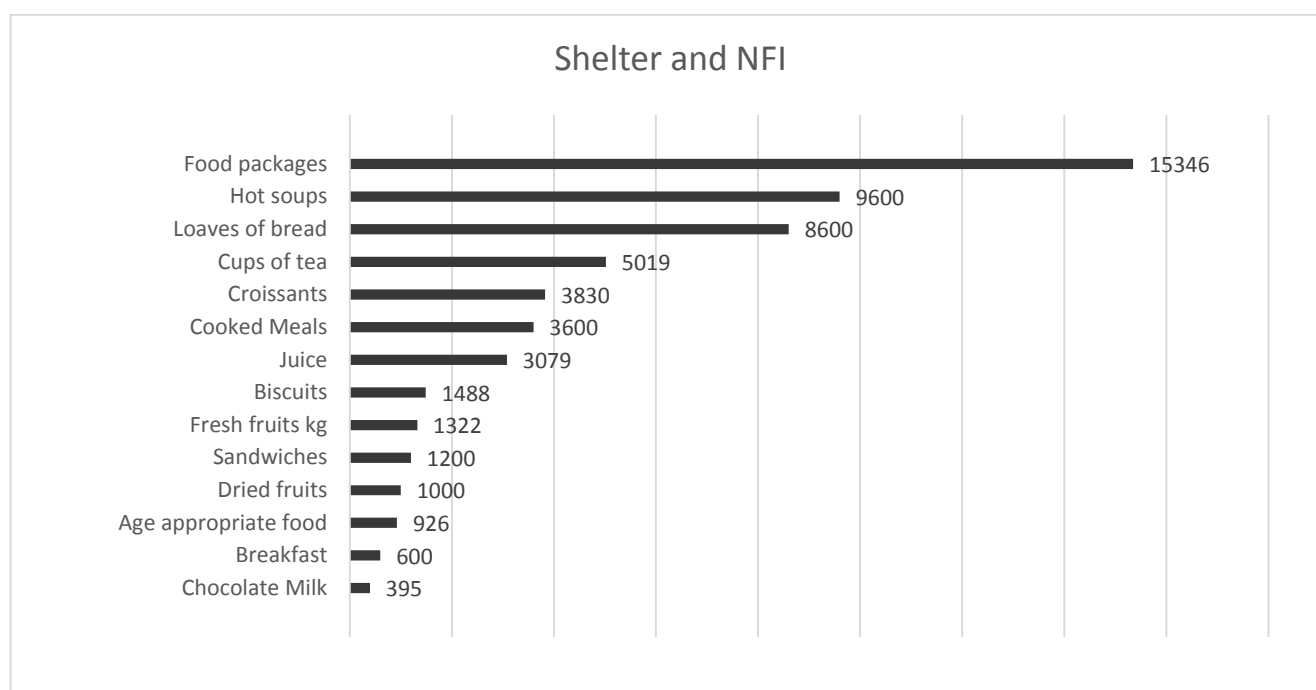
- Partners finalised the Terms of Reference for the position of Information and Advice Desk Assistant for the recruitment of four individuals (two funded by UNICEF and two funded by UNHCR) under the NGO La Strada/Open Gate to manage the IAD in Vinojug reception centre. The vacancy announcement is expected to be advertised on 17 February. UNICEF and UNHCR will provide technical support to La Strada/Open Gate to facilitate the recruitment process.

- Télécoms Sans Frontières (TSF), present in the Vinojug Reception Centre since October 2015, installed new Wi-Fi access points to boost its existing connection allowing a higher density of people (up to 2000 individuals) to be connected simultaneously to the internet.

## Shelter and NFIs

### Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR, Red Cross, La Strada, Nun, Legis, Help the Refugees in Macedonia, MSF, SOS Children's Village, and UNICEF distributed:



- Work on the new distribution point for clothing/ NFIs in Vinojug reception centre was ongoing. The first floor of the steel structure was completed and the second floor was nearly done.
- Two out of ten UNHCR Refugee Housing Units (RHUs) were fully equipped and prepared for overnight stays with three bunkbeds (in total 6 persons) and a heating unit in each RHU.
- IOM delivered three containers for refugees to the Tabanovce transit site and six more containers are expected.

### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- On 6 February, the Crisis Management Centre Deputy Manager on site reported that two janitors were caught in the morning attempting to take a large quantity of food and NFIs out of the Tabanovce site. They were reported to the police, who took the necessary steps to return the goods to the transit centre to be distributed to refugees. The janitors will face criminal charges. The goods were estimated at 28,000 MKD.
- The UNICEF-donated power generators for use in Tabanovce are still not connected to the power grid. UNICEF raised this issue with local authorities (Crisis Management Centre and Ministry of Labour and Social Policy) and was assured by the MLSP that these generators will be connected to the Tabanovce power grid as soon as possible, and will assure a quality power supply. UNICEF will follow-up on this issue.

## Working in partnership

### Achievements and Impact

The weekly coordination meeting took place on 8 February 2016 in Gevgelija but not in Tabanovce.

A national Protection Coordination meeting took place on 11 February at the UNHCR office in Skopje, with Government and protection organisations.

Partners working with the Ministries and municipalities to provide protection and assistance to refugees are: Agape, ASB, Caritas, Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Macedonia, Danish Caritas, DRC, Dorcas, Euro Human, GIZ, Grain of Goodness, Habitat for Humanity, Help the Refugees in Macedonia, HERA, IOM, JRS, Kalliri, La Strada Open Gate, Legis, MCMS (Macedonian Centre for International Cooperation), Mercy Corps, Merhamet, MYLA, Nun, Operation Mercy, People in need, Red Cross, Samaritan's Purse, Secours Islamique France, SOS Children's Village, Télécoms Sans Frontières (TSF), Terre des hommes, Vlaznia Kumanovo, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF and WHO.



*Partners assisting children in Vinojug reception centre.  
©UNHCR/P.Dimitrov, Gevgelija (fYR Macedonia) February 2016*

### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

During the weekly meeting in Gevgelija the Centre for Crisis Management requested that NGOs not get involved in work outside the scope of their regular operations.

Contacts: Lauren Panetta Chammas, Reporting Officer, panetta@unhcr.org, Cell + 389 (0) 70 298 101  
Ljubinka Brashnarska, PI/External Relations, brashnar@unhcr.org, Tel: +389 2 311 8641, Cell + 389 (0) 72 269 346