

EUROPE MONTHLY REPORT



Staff from UNHCR and IOM help 150 refugees and migrants disembark the Italian Coast Guard ship, Diciotti, in the port of Catania after a 10 day stand-off.

TRENDS AND KEY FIGURES

Between 1 January and 31 August, 84,300 refugees and migrants arrived via the three Mediterranean routes to Europe compared to almost 131,610 arrivals who arrived in the same period in 2017. This marks a 36% reduction from the previous year's arrival figures showing a continued declining trend of the overall arrivals numbers to Europe. In August 2018, there were 12,800 arrivals, slightly more than the same month in 2017 (10,600), but significantly less than August 2016 (26,300). As of 31 August, most confirmed arrivals so far this year have been to Spain with some 33,900 arriving by land and sea compared to 30,300 in Greece and 20,000 in Italy. Primary nationalities amongst arrivals in 2018 so far are Syrians, Iraqis and Guineans.

CYPRUS: In the first eight months of 2018, 166 people arrived to Cyprus by sea. Arrivals increased during August, with reportedly 7 boats reaching Cyprus, including one directly from Syria, within a period of three weeks. Recent arrival include Syrians apprehended near the buffer zone who initially arrived by boat in the north or at Ercan airport. Thus far, all registered arrivals to Cyprus were Syrian.

GREECE: Nearly 30,300 refugees and migrants have arrived by land and sea in Greece with 64% by sea so far in 2018. Sea arrivals (19,459) in this period have increased by 29% compared to the same period last year (15,119). In August 2018, over 3,197 persons arrived in Greece by sea while the Turkish Coast Guard (TCG) intercepted or rescued over 1,520 in the Aegean. According to the TCG, the total number of rescued and intercepted persons reached 16,920 since the beginning of the year. The

Mediterranean
84,300
arrivals in 2018 ¹

1,545
estimated dead/missing in 2018 ¹

Greece²
30,300
3,515 4,049 4,170
Jun Jul Aug

Italy
20,000
3,136 1,944 1,491
Jun Jul Aug

Spain²
33,900
7,313 8,940 7,022
Jun Jul Aug

Cyprus
166
61 0 93
Jun Jul Aug

New asylum applications in Europe ³

Jan-Aug 2018: **375,600**
Jan-Dec 2017: **819,000**
Jan-Dec 2016: **1,323,000**
Jan-Dec 2015: **1,471,000**

¹ data.unhcr.org/mediterranean as of 31 August 2018.

² Greece and Spain both include sea and land arrivals; Spain includes sea arrivals in the Mediterranean and to the Canary Islands.

³ Sources: Eurostats for EU+ countries (Only partial data for July and August 2018. All data is provisional and last updated 26 September 2018); UNHCR for Eastern Europe (as of 31 December 2017), Turkey (as of 31 May 2018) and South Eastern Europe (as of 31 August 2018).

34,702

Relocated in total ⁴
⁴Source: [European Commission](#), as of 31 August 2018.

 from **Greece**

21,999

(33% of 66,400)

 from **Italy**

12,703

(32% of 39,600)

1,690

Returns EU-Turkey statement ¹²
¹²Source: [Ministry of Citizen Protection](#), Greece as of 31 August 2018.

average daily number of sea arrivals to Greece in August was 103. At the Greek land border in Evros, a total of over 10,813 people have crossed into Greece in 2018 so far, with some 973 crossing during August, i.e. one third less than the 1,504 whom arrived in July. The top five countries of origin of arrivals by sea are Syrians (32%), Iraqis (20%), Afghans (19%), from Congo, Democratic Republic of (5%) and State of Palestine (4%).

ITALY: Over 20,000 refugees and migrants have arrived in Italy by sea in 2018 so far. This is an 80% decrease compared to the same period in 2017 (over 99,120). The overall reduction trend in arrival numbers to Italy this year continues with lower numbers each month since May 2018. An estimated 1,490 refugees and migrants have arrived by sea to Italy in August, a 62% decrease compared to those who arrived in August last year (3,910). Libya remains the main country of departure for persons arriving in Italy by sea. However, the proportion of sea arrivals departing from Libya has dropped significantly from 95% in January-August 2017 to 62% in January-August 2018. Furthermore, the proportion of departures from Tunisia has gradually increased, reaching 22% in the first eight months of 2018, compared to 1% in the same period last year. The largest groups that arrived by sea in Italy in August were from Tunisia (19%), Eritrea (15%), and Sudan (8%). As of 31 August 2018, over 3,090 unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) reached Italian shores.

SPAIN: In August, nearly 7,020 refugees and migrants arrived to Spain via land and sea borders of which 90% (6,400) arrived by sea. A total of 33,900 refugees and migrants have reached Spain both by land and sea so far in 2018, representing an increase of 123% compared to the same period in 2017 (over 15,000). The increase in arrivals continues to challenge existing reception capacity in some disembarkation locations in Spain. The five most common

nationalities of sea arrivals in Spain so far this year are Guineans (18%), Malians (15%), Moroccans (15%), Ivoirians (14%) and Gambians (7%).

WESTERN BALKANS: As of 30 August, some 12,400 refugees and migrants reportedly arrived in Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH) including some 2,300 who arrived in August – slightly lower than the 2,500 whom arrived the previous month. Among those, 34% were from Pakistan followed by Syrians (14%), Iranians (13%) and Afghans (10%). While many of the refugees and migrants in Bosnia and Herzegovina attempt to move onwards through Croatia and Slovenia, some 3,900 refugees and migrants were present in Serbia, a slight increase compared to the 3,600 recorded in July. UNHCR continues to offer its support to authorities and partners in order to address arising humanitarian needs.

Dead and Missing: So far in 2018, 1,550 people have died or gone missing while trying to reach Europe by sea. Most deaths occurred along the Central Mediterranean route (over 1,110 or 72%) with 330 (21%) of the deaths along the route to Spain. In relation to the numbers crossing to Europe via the Central Mediterranean route, 1 in every 74 people attempting the crossing in August died or are missing, compared to 1 in 18 during the course of 2018.

Along land routes, at least 78 refugees or migrants are known to have died so far this year, more than in the whole of 2017 (75), at or near European borders. UNHCR brought [attention](#) to the fatal figures on 03 August noting that, “despite the total number of people arriving on European shores being significantly reduced compared to previous year, the rate of deaths is on the rise”.

OTHER SITUATIONS IN EUROPE

Turkey

3.9 million

Refugees and asylum seekers ⁵

 Syrian Arab Republic **3,552,000**

 Afghanistan **172,000**

 Iraq **143,000**

 Other nationalities **57,000**
⁵ Source: UNHCR as of 31 August 2018

Ukraine

1.8 million

Internally Displaced Persons ⁶ and **Conflict Affected Persons** ⁷

 Refugees: ⁸ **3,225**

 Asylum seekers: ⁹ **5,635**

 Stateless persons: ¹⁰ **35,294**
⁶ Residing more permanently in government-controlled areas (GCA).

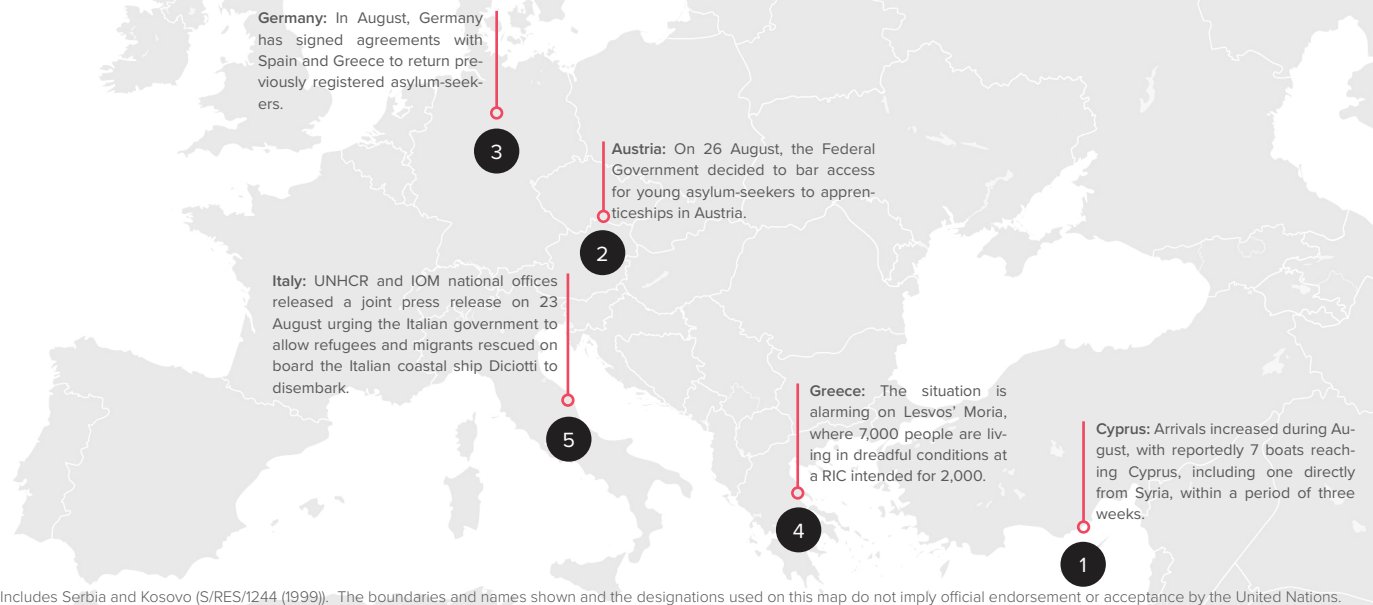
⁷ Estimated number of conflict-affected people living along the line of contact in government-controlled areas (GCA) and non-government controlled areas (NGCA).

⁸ UNHCR, State Migration Service of Ukraine as of 01/07/2018

⁹ UNHCR as of 03/08/2018

¹⁰ State Migration Service of Ukraine as of 01/01/2018

KEY DEVELOPMENTS



AUSTRIA: On 26 August, the Federal Government decided to bar access for young asylum-seekers to apprenticeships in Austria. Until now, asylum-seekers under 25 were allowed to access apprenticeships for sectors with a workforce shortage. UNHCR issued a local statement expressing its regret about the government's decision and asking it to secure access to education/vocational training for asylum-seekers. Many of those young people will eventually receive protection in Austria and are losing valuable time which could be used for integration during the asylum process. Also for those young people, who finally will not get protection and might have to leave the country, additional skills would be an asset to rebuild their lives in another country.

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA: The joint UNHCR-IOM response to the refugee and migrant situation in Una-Sana Canton, backed by the 1.5 M Euro from Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) assistance project that was launched in July, continues to be implemented with increased protection-sensitive accommodation capacities at the Temporary Reception Centre Sedra in Cazin municipality. In partnership with local health authorities, UNHCR and Danish Refugee Council (DRC) are currently supporting access to primary health care and referral services to over 1,200 people in Una-Sana Canton. There are an estimated 4,000 refugees and migrants across the Una-Sana Canton which is located in the northern re-

gion of the country. Majority of them are living in rough makeshift sites and are in need of support, UNHCR and its partners are offering humanitarian support and information provision on local asylum procedures.

GERMANY: In an [interview](#) with German newspaper BILD on 14 August, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, discussed the dangers of toxic narratives further leading to stigmatizations of refugees and migrants and called for better effectiveness for refugee and migratory issues. During the interview, Grandi referred to the larger movements in 2015 stating that, while Europe is no longer facing a refugee crisis, "the management of movements needs to be improved." He reiterated the importance of regular and safe pathways for the most vulnerable of refugees accompanied by programmes for migrants who may not be in need of international protection but are in search of a better quality of life. On the topic of refugee crises globally, Grandi emphasized the importance of meaningful political dialog to resolve conflicts such as that in Syria which continues to impact millions of civilians.

German officials are pursuing agreements to return previously registered asylum-seekers back to other EU Member States. In August, Germany has [signed agreements with Spain](#) and Greece on 06 and 17 August 2018 respectively, while a similar deal is being discussed with Italy. The agreements refuse entry at the German-Austrian border for persons who had already

claimed asylum in either Spain or Greece, and set a limit 48 hours to send them back. Unaccompanied children are exempted from this regulation.

GREECE: Government plans to accelerate the transfer of 2,000 people in August and 4,000 in September from the islands to the mainland are hindered by the limited reception capacity in the mainland. Over 1,547 have been transferred so far in August to mainland sites and UNHCR urban accommodation, compared to some 1,000 in each of June and July 2018. The Government's efforts to increase capacity in existing camps, by re-opening old camps and through additional accommodation facilities are progressing, but do not meet needs. As a result some 15,500 people continue to stay on the islands – more than double the available capacity – including 2,200 asylum-seekers with a lifted geographical restriction pending transfer, many of whom have specific needs.

The situation is alarming on Lesbos' Moria, where 7,000 4 people are living in dreadful conditions at a RIC intended for 2,000. A quarter of them are children. Media reported recently on the [physical and mental health effects](#) of Moria's conditions on refugees, and [on children attempting suicide](#). [UNHCR urged Greece](#) to address overcrowded reception centres on Aegean islands by transferring those eligible to the mainland, by increasing capacity in the mainland to host them and by improving reception centres and providing alternative accommodation for the most vulnerable. UNHCR also urged the Government to strengthen efforts to overcome administrative and logistical delays and deliver previous commitments to decongest the RICs on the islands, and to consider extraordinary measures including by working closely with civil society and non-governmental organizations in certain areas such as delivering health care.

In commemoration of **World Humanitarian Day**, on 19 August 2018, UNHCR, the Municipality of Thessaloniki and partner organizations gathered at the city's White Tower, a landmark, where they formed the word 'REMEMBER' to honour civilians caught in conflict and humanitarian workers who lost their lives in service. ([press release and photos](#), [Instagram](#)).



HUNGARY: The authorities reconsidered their new asylum policies and on 22 August resumed the provision of food to all people held in the transit zones, including those appealing inadmissibility decisions. This followed multiple interventions by UNHCR, including submissions to the European Court of Human Rights through its implementing partner the Hungarian Helsinki Committee. Early in August the authorities rejected several asylum claims based on inadmissibility grounds under the new asylum legislation.

ITALY: UNHCR and IOM national offices released a joint 5 [press release](#) on 23 August urging the Italian government to allow refugees and migrants rescued on board the Italian coastal ship Diciotti to disembark. Initially, some of the most vulnerable people including 13 people in need of medical care and 27 UASC - were allowed to leave the ship for humanitarian reasons. However, 150 people - all adults - remained on board the Diciotti, docked in the Sicilian port of Catania since 20 August. "We welcome the efforts of the Italian Coast Guard to save the lives of these men, women and children, but an urgent resolution to this impasse is needed," said Roland Schilling, UNHCR's Deputy Regional Representative in Rome. Many of those on board were in need of humanitarian assistance, international protection assessments and had already faced incredibly traumatic experiences. Finally, on 25 August the remaining passengers on the Diciotti were permitted to disembark by the Italian authorities.

MALTA: On 14 August, the Government of Malta announced that, following discussions with the French government, the stranded MV Aquarius NGO vessel was allowed to enter its ports. UNHCR [applauded](#) the decision by the Government of Malta to permit the disembarkation of 141 asylum-seekers and migrants rescued on the Central Mediterranean by the NGO boat, and also commended those European countries who have come forward to offer relocation places for rescued passengers post-disembarkation. This demonstrates the benefits that can be reaped from a collaborative approach. Nonetheless, the situation of the Aquarius and in particular the standoff of the last few days has again highlighted the need for a Mediterranean regional arrangement that provides clarity and predictability on where boats carrying rescued passengers can dock. This is essential if further such situations are to be avoided. UNHCR has repeatedly called for a regional approach for dealing with rescue and disembarkation on the Mediterranean, and spelled out proposals for this in a [joint concept note](#) dated 27 June together with the UN Migration Agency, IOM.

SPAIN: During an official meeting in Madrid between 11-12 August, Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez and Chancellor Angela Merkel agreed on reinforcing an "anti-racism" axis together with the French and Portuguese

governments. They also highlighted the dialogue and cooperation with African countries in order to isolate human traffickers from business opportunities and agreed that more aid funds will be granted to Morocco.

UKRAINE: The first official UNHCR convoy since 2015 took place on 9 August 2018. UNHCR delivered ten trucks of humanitarian cargo to Donetsk NGCA, bringing 8,280 pieces of roofing sheets for Shelter Program. This material will be used for the repair of 110 damaged houses.

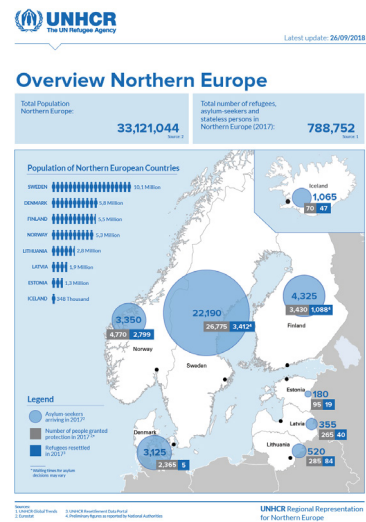
The Minsk Trilateral Contact Group (TCG) met on 22 August 2018 and agreed on a new ceasefire starting on 29 August. No discussions about prisoners and hostages exchange took place as wished by Ukrainian authorities. Reportedly, 183 Ukrainians are in prisons in the Russian Federation, Crimea and in non-government controlled areas of Donbas. The Trilateral Contact Group also agreed on a temporary closure of the exit entry check point (EECP) Stanytsia Luhanska from 2 to 7 September 2018 to finalize the connection of the checkpoint to power and water supplies. Nevertheless, on 29 August 2018, the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) reported 70 ceasefire violations just a few hours after the new ceasefire agreement started. The reporting period marked the highest daily death toll in 2018 with five Ukrainian soldiers killed and seven wounded in Donbas.

US Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration Mission to eastern Ukraine: On 6 August 2018, UNHCR facilitated a visit of BPRM's Regional Refugee Coordinator (Mr. Jonathan Leif Hayes), together with BPRM Desk Officer covering Ukraine (Mr. Srdan SadiKovic) and USAID OFDA (Mr. Bryan Schaaf) to eastern Ukraine to monitor projects supported by U.S. funding and meet with UNHCR Partners in the cities of Sviatohirsk, Sloviansk and Kramatorsk. The delegation learned about the concerns of the IDPs who are forced to live in poor conditions in collective centres, which includes elderly people and persons with disabilities. BPRM also met with UNHCR's protection partners Proliska, R2P and Slavic Heart.



UNITED KINGDOM: On 4 August, British [newspapers cited Volker Turk, UNHCR's Assistant High Commissioner for Protection's hope that the UK will double its current intake of refugees after 2020](#). This follows the AHC-P's mission to London the previous week to address a Global Disability Summit co-hosted by DFID. The key objective of the high-level meeting was to deliver ambitious new global and national level commitments on disability inclusion. In total, 170 sets of commitments were adopted by governments, multilateral organizations, the private sector and civil society. During his stay, the AHC-P also took the opportunity to meet with DIFD at the senior-level to brief them on the Global Compact on Refugees as well as to appeal for enhanced funding for UNHCR.

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REFUGEE STORIES

Daughter of a Lithuanian refugee revisits the past to shed light on the present

By Renata Kules in Vilnius, Lithuania – Tennessee hills, US

“To be forced to leave your family, country, home, and run for your life is a terrifying experience that many of us can’t imagine,” says Ruta Sepetys. Ruta Sepetys is an award-winning New York Times best-selling author; her books have been published in over fifty countries and translated into thirty-six languages. Her writing seeks to remind Lithuanians of their past, and calls for compassion towards today’s refugees.



Ruta’s father Jurgis Šepetys and his younger sister Ruta Biberach’s camp in Germany. Photo from the Sepetys family album.

Novelist Ruta Sepetys believes that in today’s world, many people are unaware of the refugees. “History is full of challenges, loss and pain, but it also reflects hope, courage and the miraculous nature of the human spirit. I hope that studying the past can bring awareness to

the present,” she notes. Her first historical fiction, inspired by the story of her family who fled Lithuania during WWII, put her on the map as an internationally acclaimed writer. She feels she has a mission: to give a voice to unheard stories, reconnect readers with history, and inspire a feeling of compassion for refugees today.

Colombian LGBTI couple flees threats to find welcome in Switzerland

By Marisol Hofmann and Julia Dao in Switzerland

In her native Colombia, activist Daniela fought hard for the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people, offering them advice and a shoulder to lean on. In a country scarred by violence, her activism was not always welcome. Daniela fled from rural Colombia to Bogota after receiving death threats, fearing for her



Daniela (left) and Sofia have found happiness and freedom in Switzerland.

safety. In Bogota she continued to campaign for LGBTI rights, met her partner and was reunited with her 10-year-old son. They lived in relative safety for a few years until new threats arose, forcing her to move house and change jobs. The family also changed their daily routine to avoid running into danger. “We were constantly anxious, frightened,” adds Daniela. When two of Daniela’s and Sofia’s activist friends were murdered, Daniela knew they would have to pack up and leave home once more.

They flew to Switzerland in December 2016 and asked for asylum upon arrival. Switzerland in the middle of December was cold, but it offered a warm welcome to the pair. Thanks to a local community project, Daniela and Sofia found safety in western Switzerland, after spending three months in a reception centre.

Since arriving, Daniela and Sofia have worked tirelessly to rebuild their lives. Their first goal is to learn French so that they can resume their LGBTI activism. They are also studying for bachelors’ degrees and volunteering at a local soccer academy. Daniela’s son is making new friends at school. “When I see my son happy and involved in the local community, and all the opportunities that are open to him in the future, I dream of building a life here in Switzerland,” she says. “But if the situation allows, I hope one day to return to Colombia to support the LGBTI people there.”

TRENDING ON TWITTER



Valérie Boyer
@valerieboyer13

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Chantage humanitaire de L’#Aquarius qui prend en otage les consciences et condamne le #TraficDEtresHumains à se poursuivre l’humanité c’est faire preuve de fermeté : Stop à la complaisance avec les passeurs esclavagistes Solidarité avec les vrais réfugiés



Mary Engleheart
@MaryEngleheart

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I met Mohamed coming out of the tube at Canary Wharf this morning. He came to the UK as a child refugee and has two degrees in Space Engineering. He’s looking for a JOB IN FINANCE. Please RT! DM me for his CV if you want to hire someone smart who thinks outside the box 🙌



Hibai Arbidé Aza
@Hibai

Follow

El Líbano es tan grande como Murcia; acoge 3,5 millones de refugiados. A las costas de Grecia han llegado 1 millón de personas desde 2015. Alemania ha acogido 800.000 refugiados en 2 años.

En España no hay crisis migratoria. RIDÍCULO considerar que 26.000 llegadas es una crisis.

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12:23 AM - 2 Aug 2018