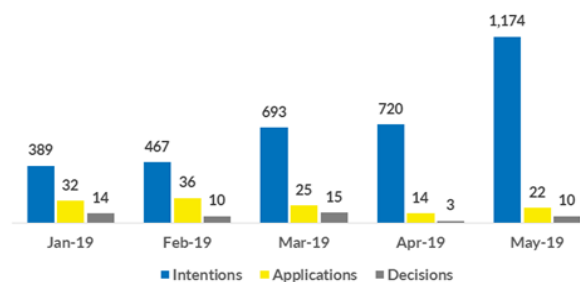


SERBIA UPDATE

- On 21 May, three young men from Afghanistan and one from Pakistan were found in critical condition at a parking lot near Novi Sad, after they had spent several hours in a sealed gas tank, at temperature above 60 degrees Celsius. Presumably, they tried to hide in the truck to clandestinely enter Croatia. Although they were immediately transferred to the Clinical Centre in Novi Sad, three passed away, including a 16 year old unaccompanied boy from Afghanistan. Families, friends and authorities cooperated in organizing the repatriation of their bodies to Afghanistan for burial. The fourth victim remains in critical condition in hospital.
- The Asylum Office (AO) of the Ministry of Interior ruled on 10 applications for asylum, granting protection to four persons and rejecting six. Thus far in 2019, the AO **recognised the protection needs of 26** asylum seekers, including five cases with LGBTI claims and one UASC, granting 12 refugee and 14 subsidiary protection status. UNHCR legal partner Belgrade Centre for Human Rights (BCHR) published its [Right to Asylum in the Republic of Serbia – Periodic Report for January–March 2019](#).
- In May, over **1,800** asylum-seekers throughout the country benefitted from **legal counselling** by UNHCR and partners, 50 asylum seeker signed power of attorney to the lawyers of UNHCR legal partner, two benefitted from psychological assessments and three from Best Interest Determinations conducted under the UNHCR project upon request of the AO.

Asylum intentions/applications/decisions



- Progress was also made in the **integration** of recognised refugees: in addition to supporting the Regional Housing Programme, UNHCR and partners, in close coordination with the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration, provided 73 adult asylum-seekers and refugees with Serbian language classes, 42 with financial and one with vocational training support, obtaining work permits for seven and private accommodation for two.
- On 17 May, the International Day against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia (**IDAHOT**), UNHCR and partners joined three LGBTI refugees in attending the first public Pride Parade in Novi Sad.
- On 29 May, an unaccompanied asylum-seeking boy, who had been assisted and [portrait](#) by UNHCR, exhibited his [artwork](#) at the Children's Cultural Centre in Belgrade.
- 310** Unaccompanied and Separated Children (UASC) benefitted from guardianship under the UNHCR project. **366** were accommodated in Asylum Centres (AC) - of which 342 in Krnjača AC, 26 in specialized centres for children and 19 in NGO-run facilities. The high number of irregularly arriving and departing UASC, their vulnerability to exploitation by smugglers and other criminals, as well as their access to legal status, education, services and safe accommodation, remained of concern.
- Continuing the implementation of its comprehensive action plan for the **Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)**, UNHCR raised awareness on PSEA in focus group discussions with residents of Sombor Reception/Transit Centre (RTC).
- Multifunctional Teams of authorities, civil society and UNHCR continued using a new **Communicating with Communities** questionnaire to conduct participatory assessments with residents of Obrenovac, Adaševci, Šid and Principovac RTCs, as well as with privately accommodated refugee women in Belgrade. The questionnaire was also used in focus group discussions with **internally displaced persons** in Belgrade and Aleksandrovac.



UNHCR and partners supported three LGBTI refugees to attend the Pride Parade, @CRPC, Novi Sad, 17 May 2019

- UNHCR and partners continued to support the Government and other stakeholders in preparing [Good Practices, Pledges and Contributions for the High Level Segment on Statelessness](#) (in Geneva on 7 Oct) and the [Global Refugee Forum](#) (in Geneva on 17-18 Dec).
- In May, UNHCR and partners identified **2,512** newly arriving refugees and migrants, up from 1,828 during April. 41% were from Pakistan (down from 48%), 36% from Afghanistan (up from 31%), followed by Iraq (8%) Bangladesh (5%) and Syria (4%). 76% were adult men, 2% adult women and 22% were children, including **456 UASC**. 79% of observed new arrivals entered Serbia from North Macedonia (down from 90%), 13% from Bulgaria (up from 4%), 4% from Albania (up from 1%) and 3% from Montenegro (down from 4%).
- At the end of May, **3,592 new** refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants were counted in Serbia – same as a month ago. **3,020** were accommodated in 16 Asylum or Reception/Transit Centres: 66% were men, 9% women and 25% children. 41% were from Afghanistan, 20% from Iran, 19% from Pakistan, 6% from Bangladesh, 5% from Iraq and 2% from Syria. Over 570 single men were observed sleeping rough: around 250 in Belgrade City and 320 near the borders with Croatia, Hungary or Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- Reports of **collective expulsions** from neighbouring countries increased to **849** (from 818 in April): 306 from Bosnia and Herzegovina (up from 173), 284 from Croatia (down from 431), 211 from Hungary (up from 187), and 48 from Romania (up from 27). 90% alleged denial of access to asylum procedures and 24% maltreatment by authorities of neighbouring countries.
- On 7 May, High Commissioner Grandi issued a [press release](#) deeply regretting that –having refused to consider the substance of their asylum claims - Hungarian authorities pushed back into Serbia two Afghan families with children. On 20 May Hungarian authorities expelled an Iranian asylum-seeker, rejected for coming from a “safe country of origin” and on 22 May a Somali asylum-seeker who had never been to Serbia before.
- UNHCR issued [seven key calls to European Parliament candidates](#). The European Commission’s Serbia Report 2019, published on 29 May, abstained from articulating recommendations on how Serbia could bring its protection, assistance or solutions for asylum-seekers, refugees, internally displaced or stateless persons further in line with applicable international and European norms and standards.
- UNHCR Serbia compiled and issued monthly updates of its [Statistical Snapshot](#) and [Joint Site Assessments](#). With over 40,000 views, the latter remained a popular and trusted information product.

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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 contributed \$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.