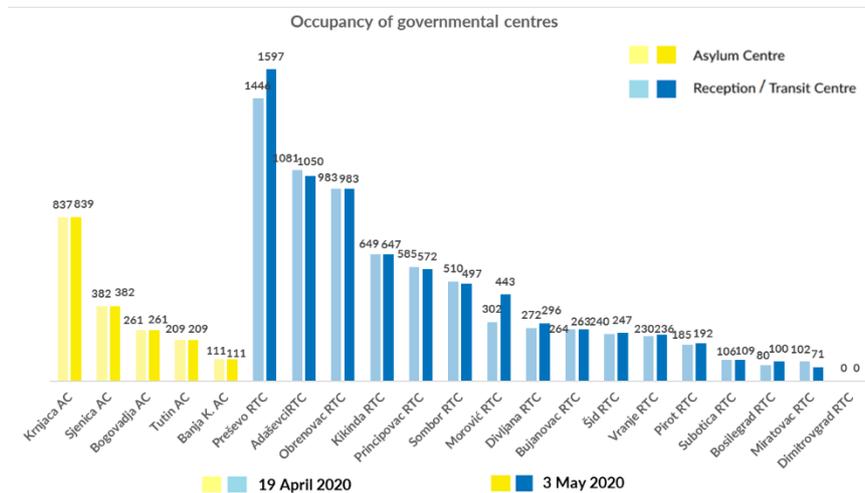


SERBIA SPECIAL FORTNIGHTLY UPDATE

- Enjoying non-discriminatory access to healthcare and testing, still no COVID-19 infection of any refugee, asylum-seekers or migrant was detected.
- The UNHCR office and programme stayed open and fully operational, as did those of our ten partner organizations, who, during April, delivered close to 5,000 legal, psycho-social and other counselling services, [Serbian language](#) and other education classes, cultural mediation and interpretation as well as emergency humanitarian aid to refugees, asylum-seekers, unaccompanied or separated children (UASC), internally displaced or stateless persons. Eight partners networked expertise and services into a [joint fb page](#) offering a wealth of information and services to refugees and asylum-seekers online and on phone in six languages. In close coordination with authorities and full respect of hygiene and health precautions, UNHCR and partners, carefully increased field activities and visits.
- The number of new refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants counted in Serbia grew by 270 to 9,330: 108 refugees reside in private accommodation, 47 UASC in specialised homes, while 9,105 asylum-seekers and migrants are confined into five Asylum Centres (AC) and 15 Reception/Transit Centres (RTC). Over 70% of centre residents originate from so called refugee producing countries and would likely be granted international protection once subject to fair and efficient asylum procedures. Centre residents comprise 3,929 citizens of Afghanistan, 1,700 of Syria, 1,037 of Pakistan, 624 of Bangladesh, 380 of Iraq, 348 of Iran, 254 of Morocco, 185 of Palestine, and 648 from 45 other countries. 7,486 are adult men, 416 adult women and 1,203 children, including 645 UASC.



- The Serbian Commissariat for Refugees and Migration (SCRM) continued to include centre residents into active [measures to protect them from Covid-19 infection](#). With the start of the holy month on 24 April, it adjusted the menu and distribution time of meals for centre residents who observe Ramadan, adding dates and dried fruits.
- UNHCR recorded 115 irregular new arrivals (including 3 UASC), all from North Macedonia - down from 138 arrivals during the preceding fortnight.
- Hungarian authorities did not admit any asylum seekers into their territory or procedures at the two so-called “transit zones” of Roske and Tompa, with the last greatly reduced admissions having taken place in February. Collective expulsions, however, continued, with 85 cases recorded in the past two weeks (56 from Romania, 29 from Hungary), compared to 103 reported collective expulsions during the preceding fortnight.
- The value of COVID-19 related procurements donated to front-line institutions that protect persons UNHCR cares for reached 103,650 USD, when UNHCR Serbia donated further liquid soap, hand sanitizer, protective masks and gloves to the Serbian Commissariat for Refugees and Migration (SCRM) and the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs (MOLEVSA). UASC homes received 12 desktops and accompanying software for online learning, as well as hygiene supplies.
- The SCRM advised asylum seekers and migrants to abstain from leaving centres once the Army withdraws with the lifting of the State of Emergency. The Ministry of Interior did not respond to UNHCR’s [Practical Recommendations and Good Practice to Address Protection Concerns in the Context of the COVID-19 Pandemic](#) or its [offers to support resumption of asylum registration and processing](#), which would grant migrants access to temporary legal status and rights to discourage them from trying to *en masse* irregularly leave Serbia again. The SCRM also informed the 443 residents of tent camp Morović, opened by the Army on 10 April, that Morović would be decommissioned and all residents moved to other governmental centres.

- UNHCR kept in regular contact with all asylum-seekers and refugees in private accommodation. With twelve refugee households newly bereft of income due to the State of Emergency, the number of beneficiaries of monthly UNHCR cash assistance rose to 69 persons/32 households. 83 refugees and asylum seekers were supported in local integration. Partner Belgrade Centre for Human Rights (BCHR) obtained ID cards for eleven refugees/asylum seekers and work permits for six.
- As schools remained closed, UNHCR provided distant learning support to 15 refugee children by donating laptops, MS Office packages and headphone sets, while continuing to support six refugees with Serbian language lessons. Six asylum-seekers/refugees were assisted with preparing for driving-licence tests while partner Sigma Plus enhanced their [online learning platform](#) with driving theory lessons. 65 received online Serbian lessons by partners Psychosocial Innovation Network (PIN) and Sigma plus. UNHCR donated 12 desktops with software packages to UASC in specialised homes to enable their online schooling. Cultural mediators of partner Crisis Response and Prevention Centre (CRPC) explained to them learning requirements and facilitated communication with peers and teachers.



*Asylum-seekers and migrants sewing protective masks in Vranje RTC,
©UNHCR, April 2020*

- BCHR issued a periodic report on [Right to Asylum in the Republic of Serbia in January-March 2020](#), highlighting fake news on refugees and migrants and lack of objective reporting by mainstream media. PIN provided psychosocial support to 167 asylum seekers and refugees, incl. 19 UASC, and psychiatric support to another 25. The Danish Refugee Council (DRC) continued identifying, counselling and referring survivors of SGBV and, supported by Crisis Response and Policy Centre, trained UASC Peer Educators on gender norms and customary law. After a ten day cautionary break, Indigo resumed daily services for children in five centres in South Serbia.
- On 24 April, the ECtHR dropped an interim measure against Serbia [but instructed the City of Belgrade to provide minimum conditions for life for 300 Roma living in Ćukarička forest](#). On 27 April, public utility services placed a water cistern in this settlement. 28-29 April, partner A11 accompanied inspections of the Ombudsman's Office to informal settlement and unofficial collective centres in Belgrade, Pančevo and Kovin.

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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 contribution \$10 million or more, the total amount of the contribution is shown.

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