

GREECE

REFUGEE EMERGENCY RESPONSE- UPDATE #5

05 – 19 October 2015

KEY FIGURES

502,840

Sea arrivals in Greece as of 19 October

87,000

Sea arrivals to Greece during the reporting period

23 %

Of arrivals are children

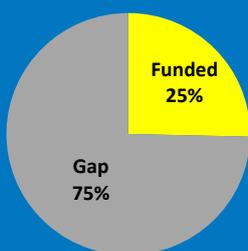
9,000

Total arrival to Greece on 17 October

FUNDING

USD 11.4 million

requested for the situation in Greece in 2015

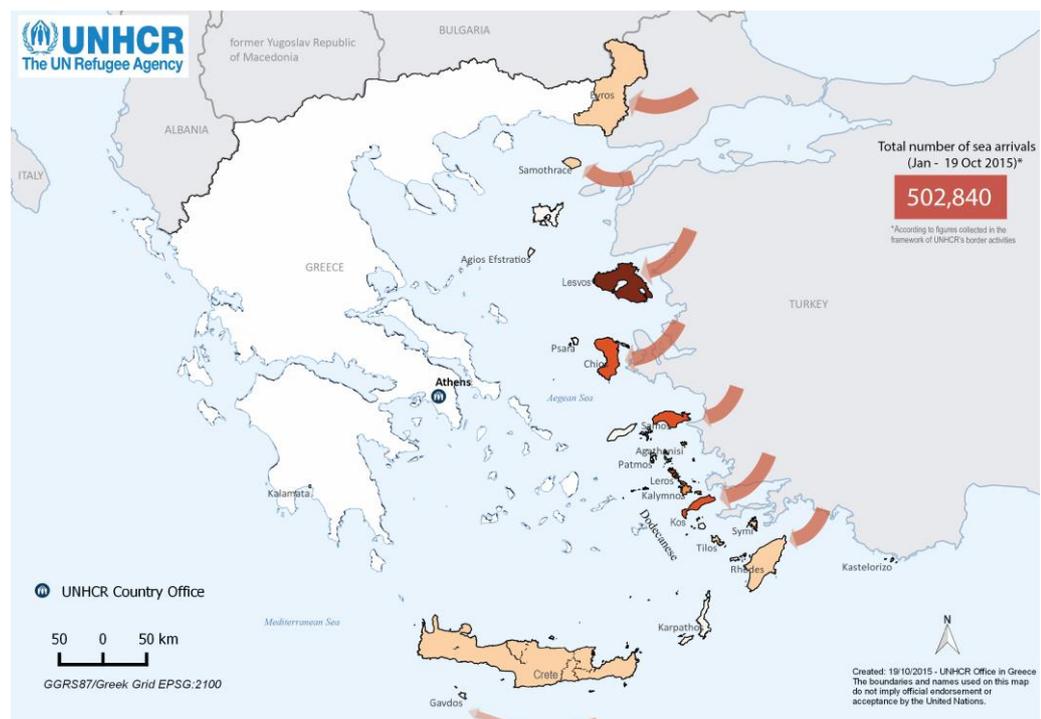


PRIORITIES

- Boost reception capacity and provide emergency assistance in receiving countries through support for States, civil society and local communities.
- Strengthen protection systems and prevent *refoulement* including through presence and capacity building.
- Increase strategic messaging and advocacy to and about people of concern.

HIGHLIGHTS

- As of October 19, the number of sea arrivals since the beginning of 2015 has exceeded 500,000, more than half of them since September. Lesbos remains the primary landing point for smuggler boats from Turkey. Chios is now second in arrivals, with over 17,000 people in less than three weeks. With an average of 3,500 arrivals per day on Lesbos, the situation grew increasingly intense in the already overstretched reception and registration facilities. In all islands, the increase in arrivals led to a growing backlog in registration. Arrivals reached 9,000 on Oct. 9 and remained high throughout the third week of the month.
- UNHCR started implementing plans for winter to prepare for rougher climatic conditions the refugees will face upon arrival in Greece and throughout their onward journey.
- Six shipwrecks took place off the coasts of Lesbos, Leros and Samos during the reporting period, taking the lives of 20 people.
- Significant improvements were made to increase the ad-hoc emergency solutions in Samos, Chios and Leros. However, these solutions remain inadequate and substandard in light of the increasing number of arrivals since mid-October and the deterioration of weather conditions.
- The High Commissioner for Refugees, António Guterres, visited the operation in Lesbos and in Athens from 9 to 12 October.



UPDATE ON ACHIEVEMENTS

Operational Context

During the reporting period, over 87,000 refugees and migrants arrived in Greece, the average daily arrival figure reached 5,800. However, arrivals ranged from an 3,700 to 9,000. In October, a significant increase of arrivals was noticed on Chios and Samos, while arrivals in Lesvos continued to count for around 60% of the total. The main nationalities of refugees and migrants arriving in Greece are Syrians (66%), Afghans (23%) and Iraqis (6%). Although Syrians continued to arrive in Greece in a high rate, the rate of Afghans and Iraqis increased, therefore affecting the percentage distribution. Bad weather conditions appeared to have little impact on total number of arrivals, but impacted the number of shipwrecks. Over the reporting period, 6 shipwrecks occurred counting for 13 deaths, half shipwrecks happening in 2 days only. The collision between a rubber boat and a Coast Guard vessel claimed 7 lives on 15 October.

With the high number of arrivals pressure grew on the government's already overstretched reception and registration facilities on the island. Violence erupted on Lesvos, especially but not only on 15 October at Moria registration site when groups of single men forced their way into the registration offices. Sporadic tensions occurred in other islands as well, driven by the lengthening waiting period and a lack of adequate accommodations.

The High Commissioner for Refugees, António Guterres, accompanied by the Assistant High Commissioner for Operations, the Director of the Bureau for Europe and Regional Refugee Coordinator, and the Head of Communications and Public Information Services visited the operation in Lesvos and in Athens from 9 to 12 October, during which Mr. Guterres met Prime Minister Tsipras.

The first steps toward the implementation of European Council decisions on relocation were undertaken. The First Reception Center in Moria, in Lesvos, started operating as hotspot on 7 October. And the Greek Asylum Service has submitted the first six relocation requests for Syrian asylum-seekers.

Achievements



Protection

UNHCR protection presence:

- **Presence and outreach at entry locations.** UNHCR is strengthening its presence and outreach capacity with permanent community-based protection teams in six sea entry locations (Lesvos, Chios, Samos, Leros, Kos, Rhodes) and one land entry point (Orestiada). Field teams have a roving capacity which enables coverage of 10 sea entry locations through missions. Thanks to the presence of 40 protection and community based protection staff, UNHCR ensured protection through its presence in all the main locations. The presence of staff deployed in both of the transport assembly points in northern Lesvos has proven to be an efficient way of identifying vulnerable cases. A second shipment of items (high energy biscuits, blankets water, baby kits) was transferred to the islet of Farmakonissi to assist those landing on this military base before being transferred to Leros.
- **Urban activities.** UNHCR continued to monitor the situation in the emergency shelter in Galatsi, which essentially accommodates Afghan nationals. The number of people of concern in the site has dropped significantly, from 1,000 people to slightly more than 100 people on October 16. The average period of stay in the site is 2-3 days. Teams provide information to refugees, including new arrivals, vulnerable cases and potential family reunification cases. The information sessions cover their rights and obligations in Greece in accordance with national and EU law, as well as individualized follow-up assistance and support. A system is in place to ensure that survivors of shipwrecks and other vulnerable cases identified on the islands are carried out by UNHCR's team when arriving on mainland.
- **Border crossing point of Eidomeni (GRE/FYR border).** On average, 6,100 persons have passed through the temporary facility in Eidomeni on a daily basis during the reporting period. The close collaboration between partners, and the deployment of a Camp Coordination and Camp Manager (CCCM) expert, made possible some

improvements in the organization of the site that ensured full access by refugees to information and the distribution of aid items.

- **Provision of information.** Provision of information on procedures, rights, responsibilities, and assistance to refugees is a core protection activity and requires constant adjustment to meet the changing information needs of the refugees. The presence of UNHCR in both assembly points in Lesvos has proven to be a good strategy for facilitation of information sessions and for strengthening the identification of protection cases. On Samos and Chios, since refugees are no longer detained prior registration, UNHCR is unable to hold information sessions for all non-Syrians hosted in the center. However, UNHCR continued to provide information to as many as possible and paid special attention in reaching the most vulnerable. On Kos, UNHCR intensified individual and group information sessions to put an end to rumors of special direct flights to Germany for pregnant women. Information sessions reached an estimated 7,000 people a day in all locations.
- **Ensuring safety and security during registration procedures.** Registration procedures continue to vary between islands, depending in part on the number of people to be registered. UNHCR ensures a daily presence in the registration site to support the authorities in implementing the registration procedures on the islands. Information is provided to persons of concern on applied procedures, and those with special needs are prioritized. This is especially important given the steadily increasing number of arrivals. In all islands, the backlog increased during the reporting period, leading to waiting period of up to seven days, on Lesvos. A decision by Lesvos authorities to proceed with the registration of all refugees in Moria, combined with the increasing number of arrivals, led to growing congestion at the site and major tensions. UNHCR supported authorities in establishing a consistent system to manage the numbers of Syrians entering Moria for registration in an attempt to prevent the uncoordinated flow of people heading to the registration site, including those who walked from the north shores.
- **Profiling and identification of vulnerable cases.** Protection teams continued to identify and provide individual protection support to people with specific needs on a daily basis. Unaccompanied and separated children, people with disabilities or in need of medical treatment are the most commonly identified. UNHCR worked in close cooperation with partners to provide wheelchairs and crutches to refugees as well as to refer medical cases. A system of early warning and referral is being implemented between UNHCR in Athens and in Eidomeni, as well as a second stage of referrals with UNHCR counterparts in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. On Samos, the team worked to ensure that access to containers where refugees are hosted was based on vulnerability. On Kos, an agreement with the public prosecutor and police was reached on an alternative to detention of UAMs, with daily care and accommodation now handled by UNHCR's local partner, Praksis.
- **Family separation.** During the congestion in Moria, Lesvos, seven cases of child separation were recorded and resolved thanks to announcements and outreach to locate the families. Cases of family separation during the trip from Turkey were reported and UNHCR helped refugees to contact their relatives. In Lesvos, the Hellenic Red Cross offered a hotline service to report family separations cases. In Eidomeni UNHCR Greece works in close cooperation with UNHCR colleagues on the other side of the FYROM border to prevent such situations.
- **Capacity building.** UNHCR conducted training in Kos for volunteers on key humanitarian principles, including 'do no harm.' In Chios, Samos, Athens and Eidomeni, 127 people, including UNHCR staff, volunteers, partners and municipal staff, received Psychological First Aid training. Sessions in Lesvos and Kos are planned. In all islands, UNHCR uses coordination meetings and working groups as the main capacity building forum. It also ensures close cooperation with volunteers to monitor activities they implement such as distribution or clean-up campaigns.
- **Assistance in improving shelter and accommodation.** On Lesvos, UNHCR put in place a minivan system to transfer vulnerable refugees from the shores to the assembly points before larger buses take them to Mytileni. Improvement of shelter, as detailed in the section below, have a direct impact on the protection and dignity of refugees and the prevention of tensions and violence, including SGBV.



A member of UNHCR explains to a newly arrived group the procedure for crossing the border with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

- **Protection response to shipwrecks.** Between 9-18 October, six shipwrecks claimed 20 lives, and two missing persons. UNHCR, in close coordination with authorities and partners, supported survivors with food, accommodation, psychosocial support, interpreters, legal assistance in the process of claiming their missing relatives and in making an informed decision as regards their future. In Lesbos, UNHCR established standard operating procedures for the follow up and support to survivors. UNHCR was also involved in the follow-up process for identifying six bodies found in coastal areas of Kos and Samos, with the objective of tracing family links.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

There are 44 known sea landing points and one land entry point (Evros region), making reception activities for new arrivals a major challenge. People arrive on daily basis to big islands (as Lesbos, Kos), but also islets (as Pserimnos, Agathonisi), rocks and military bases (Farmakonisi, Kalolimnos) where UNHCR does not have access.

- The frequent changes in applied registration procedures limit the understanding of refugees and hinder the provision of consistent information.
- High numbers of arrivals, lack of reception infrastructure (Kos), recurring tensions, the presence of riot police (Lesbos) and general overcrowding limit access to people of concern and hinder UNHCR's ability to identify persons with special needs and to profile the population.
- An improvement of the registration capacities, the crowd control system and the identification of vulnerable individuals is crucial, and needs to be addressed by State actors with the assistance also of civil society groups and organizations operational on Lesbos. Similar challenges need to be addressed in other locations, even though they may face fewer arrivals.
- Serious gaps remain in the identification and protection of unaccompanied and separated children. There is a lack of appropriate shelters in almost all islands. As a result, most children remain under police custody in substandard conditions and with insufficient care until they are transferred to open reception facilities in the mainland. Such conditions may be traumatizing for children, who on several instances have later left the open shelters where they were transferred to continue their journey. On Kos, demarches made with the competent public prosecutor led to an agreement for children to be temporarily placed in a transit facility under the care of one of UNHCR's partners.
- Many cases, entitled to apply for family reunification, including some UAM and shipwreck survivors, prefer to continue to travel due to the lengthy time of Dublin procedures for family reunification.



Site Planning, Shelter, CCCM and Basic Relief Items

Achievements and Impact

Shelter

UNHCR remained engaged in the improvement of reception capacity. However, the ad-hoc emergency solutions found in Samos, Chios and Leros to meet ongoing urgent needs tend not to be replaced by more adequate, longer-term solutions. Reception capacity falls far short of the needs on all islands.

- On **Leros**, UNHCR continued to improve WASH conditions in both the abandoned hotel used as a temporary emergency reception shelter, and in the port police compound where refugees are detained throughout completion of procedures. UNHCR installed two additional water tanks in the shelter as well as seven toilets, including one for disabled persons. MSF installed two additional showers and three toilets. In addition, UNHCR and partners ensured daily hygiene campaigns in the shelter. Leros municipality has approved UNHCR's request to place 21 RHU at the yard of the informal settlement as a more suitable winter shelter to replace existing MSF tents.
- On **Samos**, in order to improve the situation on the island, which was deteriorating due to the high number of arrivals, authorities asked UNHCR to improve and expand accommodation through provision of 20 refugee housing units at the port, in addition to 20 container shelters. A technical mission rearranged the current site and improved WASH conditions. In addition, a new assembly point will be established in Karlovasis port on the northern coast of the island. Ten refugee housing units are to be set up there.

- On **Chios**, UNHCR and authorities continued to cooperate on improvements at the Mersinidi center. Five family tents were pitch and one rubhall erected, providing more protection against bad weather conditions. This is in addition to 25 family tents installed previously that could not accommodate the increasing number of refugees. Five rain covers were also installed. Lights and power sockets to charge phones were also provided in tented area. In parallel, work continued on the construction of a fully functional site.

UNHCR, in cooperation with the Mayor of Kalymnos, conducted preparatory work for the installation of 10 RHUs at the port, as well as the rehabilitation, expansion and management of the current temporary shelter.

In parallel, in Oinousses island, UNHCR will refurbish and winterize a building to ensure that proper shelter is provided to refugees waiting to be transferred to Chios.



Rub hall and family tents installed in Mersinidi Camp, Chios

- On **Lesvos**, the reception capacity was increased thanks to the setting up of 131 refugee housing units (RHU) during the reporting period. The total of RHUs installed in Lesvos reached 220, including 148 in Kara Tape, 56 in Moria, 6 in Pikpa, 5 in Molyvos assembly site, and 5 in Skala Sikaminea.
- As the majority of refugees arrive on the north shore of Lesvos, a new assembly site was needed to provide assistance and protection to people of concern while they await transfer to registration sites in Mytileni. The new assembly point set up in Skala Sikaminea is composed of one rub hall, with a capacity of 400 people, five RHU, winterized shades and two toilets. Its management was handed over to authorities and volunteers. UNHCR is present on the site to support actors and carry out mainstream protection activities.
- On **Kos**, a shelter/accommodation working group, coordinated by UNHCR, was initiated to harmonize and coordinate initiatives undertaken by all actors, including volunteers, for the provision of accommodation to people of concern in the absence of proper reception facilities.



A UNHCR temporary shelter used as a warehouse of donated blankets, camping mats and clothes in the Sikaminea assembly point.

OPERATION WINTER

UNHCR has started to adapt its assistance to winter and rougher climatic conditions that affect refugees from the moment they disembark from boats and in every step of their journey through Greece and onward. The three main elements of the operation currently being implemented are:

- Improvement of reception conditions through establishment of assembly points; winterization of shelters; and adequate site planning solutions to protect refugees from the weather (rain covers, solar panels for shower heating, installation of insulated RHU flooring).
- Provision of additional winter items in the standard NFI package (rain coats, winter clothing).
- Provision of transport from disembarkation points to reception/registration sites

Basic Relief Items

- During the reporting period, over 3,000 sleeping mats, 14,000 packets of high-energy biscuits, 3,000 blankets, 990 sleeping bags and 1,200 hygiene kits, 250 baby kits and 1,400 solar lamps were distributed on the islands. Whenever possible, depending on actors present on each island, UNHCR hands over NFIs to partners and volunteer groups to

carry out the actual distribution on Leros. This ensures close monitoring and coverage of all arriving refugees. Distributions of NFIs provided by UNHCR complement those carried out by other actors, which include clothes and shoes for refugees who are often wet from their voyage and or without adequate clothing.



A young Afghan boy tries a pair of shoes, donated by refugee solidarity groups in Eidomeni site

- Major improvements were made in ensuring the cleanliness of the Eidomeni site through close monitoring, awareness campaigns and the provision of additional bins by the municipality. These improvements also had positive impacts in terms of protection, as refugees were more comfortable staying in clean rubhalls where they could receive information and avoid being separated.
- A second shipment of non-food items (NFIs) was transferred to Farmakonissi, a military island, where refugees and migrants often land and may remain for several days before being transferred to Leros. UNHCR closely monitored the distribution of the first shipment and adapted the stock to the needs of the refugees by providing baby kits in addition to high-energy biscuits and blankets.

Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM)

- Three CCCM experts were seconded to UNHCR from the Norwegian Refugee Council to support various operations in the sites, including the coordination of aid deliveries and capacity building among stakeholders. One expert is permanently based in Lesvos, the other one in Eidomeni and a third one is roving. Two more experts are expected to be located in Samos.
- Some of the systems that are being developed include guidelines and standard operating procedures for allocation of accommodation (tents, beds, rub halls) to ensure the prioritization of the most vulnerable; strengthening of coordination meetings that are already taking place; and the developing of a gap analysis matrix per site to reduce duplication and improve complementarity between actors. CCCM experts are also supporting the implementation of a mass information dissemination systems per site.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Despite improvements made, the reception infrastructure and capacity remained a major obstacle to protection activities on every island. On all islands, the situation deteriorated due to the increasing number of arrivals during the reporting period. At the same time, weather conditions were worsening, resulting in overcrowded, substandard emergency shelters in Leros, Chios and Samos. Throughout the islands, people slept rough and pitched tents on public areas because no other facilities were available. Tensions increased between refugees and the local population on Chios, as well as within the refugee communities themselves.
- UNHCR remains concerned about the distribution of food, which is undertaken only on a temporary basis on Samos, Chios and Leros by the NGOs Apostoli and International Orthodox Christian Charities and by volunteers. A sustainable and durable solution is required.
- The coordination and management of distributions need further improvement to ensure better coverage of the needs. Capacity building activities for volunteers, such as on-the-spot training, need to be reinforced. CCCM experts are working on methodology for distributions.

Working in partnership

- UNHCR continues to closely cooperate with the European Commission and relevant EU agencies, including FRONTEX and EASO.

- UNHCR's emergency assistance and protection services in Greece are delivered through several partners, including: the Greek Refugee Council; Praxis; ICMC; METAction; Ecumenical Refugee Council; Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction; Hellenic League for Human Rights; and Hellenic Theatre Drama & Education Network. These partners have supported the provision of legal assistance and information on rights and obligations, the addressing of immediate relief/medical needs of persons of concerns and the transfer of unaccompanied children to specialized facilities on the mainland as part of the annual programme and the emergency appeal. UNHCR continues to closely cooperate with IOM, MSF, MDM, IRC, Hellenic Red Cross, Apostoli/IOCC among others, as well as with groups of volunteers, which play a significant role in the provision of assistance to refugees. In addition, in line with the Refugee Coordination model, UNHCR supports the Government's coordination efforts at central and local level, facilitating general and sectorial coordination meetings.
- General coordination meetings take place on a weekly basis on all islands and every other week at a central level. Sectorial coordination meetings are also organized every week or two weeks on the islands and Eidomeni. In Leros, for example, the NFI working group takes place every week.
- UNHCR is selecting partners in the framework of the previous call for expressions of interest to enhance the humanitarian response on the islands and mainland.

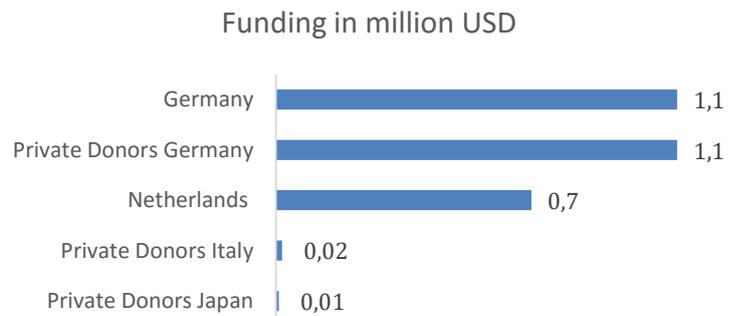
FINANCIAL INFORMATION

On 30 September, UNHCR presented its revised appeal of USD 128 million for the Special Mediterranean Initiative (June 2015 – December 2016), which incorporates targeted programmes in countries of asylum or transit in Africa and the North Africa sub-region. The total financial requirements for Europe from June 2015 to December 2016 now amount to USD 77.4 million (USD 29.9 million for June-December 2015 and USD 47.5 million for January-December 2016), including support costs. Out of this total amount, USD 27.2 million are requested for the humanitarian response in Greece (USD 11.4 million for 2015 and USD 15.8 million for 2016).

A total of USD 6.8 million has so far been received for this emergency appeal, including USD 2.9 million for activities in Greece. UNHCR is very grateful for the financial support provided by donors who have contributed to their activities with unearmarked and broadly earmarked funds as well as for those who have contributed directly to the situation.

Funding :

A total of **USD 2.9 million** has been funded out of **USD 11.4 million** requested for activities in 2015



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