

FYR MACEDONIA

INTER-AGENCY OPERATIONAL UPDATE

12 August – 18 August 2015

KEY FIGURES

3,000

Food packages distributed

2,813

Medical interventions provided

350

People provided with direct legal assistance

501

Unaccompanied minors identified

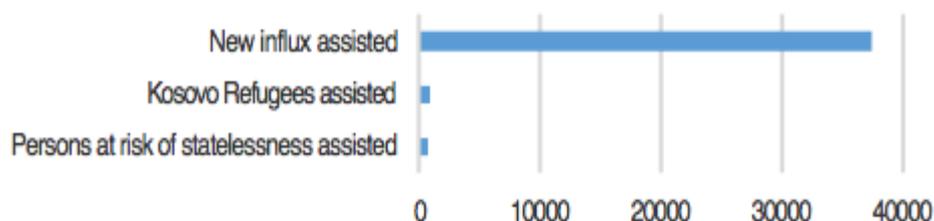
PRIORITIES

- 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

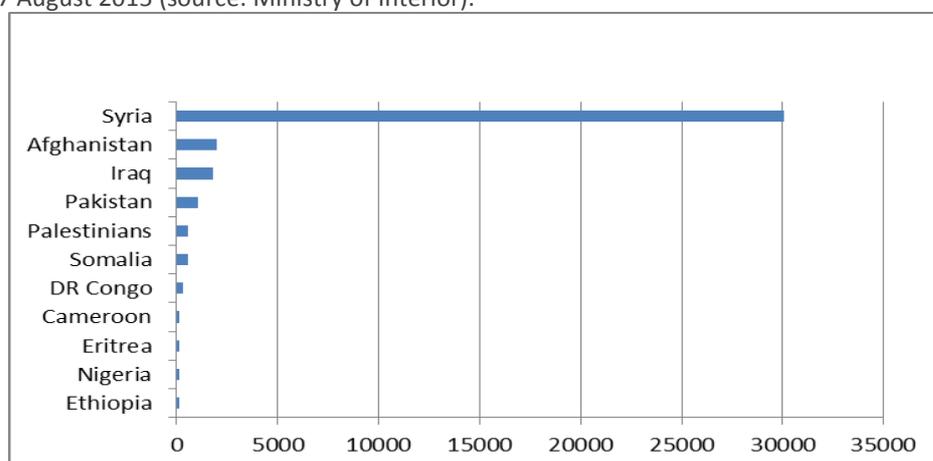
HIGHLIGHTS

- The high number of refugees crossing the border from Greece, entering the city of Gevgelija in FYR Macedonia, is at an estimated 1,500 arrivals per day with daily peaks up to 2,200, pressuring the current registration facilities to and above the limit.
- UNHCR is supporting the Ministry of Interior (MoI) to process the increased demands. Twelve new data entry clerks, new software and computer hardware funded by IOM, and a token system has increased the pace of registration and thereby addressed some of the needs. However the improvements are not sufficient and more measures are needed to ensure a protection sensitive procedure.
- The first day waiting area at the Gevgelija train station is in the final phase. Once fully operational it will provide a safe place for the most vulnerable individuals. With the growing numbers of refugees an increased response will be necessary. UNHCR is continuing to advocate strongly with the Government to identify an urgently needed second site to improve the registration process and meet the basic needs of the refugees.

A total of **39,006** people of concern (source UNHCR)



Intention to apply for asylum: 37,461 applications have been filed from 19 June to 17 August 2015 (source: Ministry of Interior).



UPDATE ON ACHIEVEMENTS

Operational Context

The current average arrival rate in Gevgelija is estimated at 1,500 arrivals per day with daily peaks up to 2,200. The Ministry of Interior registered a total of 37,461 persons as of 17 August 2015. 80% of the arrivals are Syrians, 5% Afghans, 5% Iraqis, 3% Pakistanis and the remainder represents other nationalities such as Somalis, Palestinians, Congolese and Cameroonians. In the same period 47 applications for asylum were registered out of which 34 were submitted by Syrians.



UNHCR Field Staff assisting newly arrived refugees in Gevgelija, photo A.Moller, UNHCR

Achievements

Protection

Achievements and Impact

- The number of refugees crossing the border from Greece, entering the city of Gevgelija in FYR Macedonia, continues to be high with 37,461 persons registered their intention to apply for asylum, including 6,450 children, of whom 564 are unaccompanied since 19 June 2015. Measures are being put in place by the Ministry of Interior, in collaboration with UNHCR, to process the increased demands for registration. The addition of twelve new data entry clerks through the Macedonian Young Lawyers Association (MYLA), new software and a token system will increase the pace of registration and thereby address the needs of refugees at the train station. Most of the data entry clerks are already operating. The data entry clerks, the software and token system are financed by UNHCR. The desktops and printers for the activity are financed by IOM.
- The day waiting area will be operated by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs with Macedonian Red Cross, La Strada, MYLA, UNICEF and UNHCR presence.
- During the reporting period approximately 350 persons were offered free legal advice at the railway station. Also MYLA assisted 15 asylum seekers at the Vizbegovo Reception Center with their asylum procedure. These activities are funded by UNHCR.
- UNICEF is supporting the NGO Open Gate La Strada to set up a team of pedagogues that will cater for the needs of children transiting the train station in Gevgelija. The team of pedagogues is equipped with appropriate didactic material and toys to provide a child-friendly environment and identify children in need of additional psycho-social support. The two pedagogues are mobile and do outreach and the procurement of child-friendly equipment is in place.
- Around 100 flyers with information in English and Arabic have been distributed by Help the Migrants in Macedonia.



Women register with the MoI. Photo A.Moller, UNHCR

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- The UNHCR information desk in Gevgelija is operating several hours daily to cater for some of the information needs of the refugees related to registration and protection. In the coming days the work of the information desk will be adjusted to the situation and needs on the ground.



Health

Achievements and Impact

- During the reporting period the Red Cross provided 2,813 medical interventions out of which 291 were pregnant women and 1,195 were children. Four mobile teams of the Red Cross are working in two shifts to provide medical assistance and first aid in Gevgelija and Tabanovce. This activity is funded by UNHCR.
- The Ministry of Health provides voluntary vaccination at Gevgelija train station throughout the day. In addition, the MoH issued an instruction to health care institutions for provision of free medical services to the migrants.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Shortage of insulin and lack of gynecological ultrasound machine.
- WHO in cooperation with the Ministry of Health will support training on refugees' health for the medical teams in the hospitals in Gevgelija and Kumanovo, as well as for the Red Cross volunteers. The training is envisaged to take place mid-September.



Food Security and Nutrition

Achievements and Impact

- The NGOs Nun, Legis and Help the Migrants with the support of individuals are providing daily food packages and other products to the refugees. During the reporting period 3,000 food packages were distributed.
- Supported by UNICEF, Red Cross is distributing age specific food for babies in Gevgelija.
- The Red Cross provided 433 food kits last week.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- The risk of a shortage in food distribution which is normally provided by NGOs is not yet addressed. Discussions are ongoing with all stakeholders to find a timely solution.



Water and Sanitation

Achievements and Impact

- The installation of ten toilets and four showers is completed in Gevgelija as well as ten toilets in Tabanovce, all funded by UNHCR.
- The Red Cross provided 891 hygienic parcels (for men, women and babies).
- Legis, Nun and Help the Migrants in Macedonia distributed daily hygienic goods to babies consisting of; diapers (200), creams (10), baby wipes (20 kg) shoes and clothing (50 pcs each), and to women; pads (100 pcs), wipes (50 packages), shoes (50 pair).

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- With an average of 1,500 arrivals passing daily through the train stations in Gevgelija and Tabanovce, the existing WASH facilities are still insufficient.

- Hygiene promotion activities and a health awareness campaign might become necessary as the rate of arrivals increases.

Communication and Information

Achievements and Impact

- On August 14th, the regular field coordination meeting was organized in Gevgelija by the MLSP and UNHCR. Information campaign flyers to avoid exploitation and abuse of refugees were presented at the meeting.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Community outreach activities to raise awareness about the plight of the refugees to mitigate tensions between the local communities are planned for next week.



Day waiting area in Gevgelija Photo L. Leonelli, UNHCR

Working in partnership

- The refugee response activities are headed by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Transport and Communications. Partners working with the Ministries and municipalities to provide protection and assistance to refugees are: Help the Migrants in Macedonia, HERA, IOM, La Strada Open Gate, Legis, MYLA, Nun, Drika, Vlaznija, Red Cross, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, and WHO.
- On August 14th, the regular field coordination meeting was organized in Gevgelija by the MLSP and UNHCR. It was decided to plan local community outreach to sensitize the locals who have been overwhelmed by the large influx of refugees.

(END)

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