

FYR MACEDONIA

INTER-AGENCY OPERATIONAL UPDATE

4 August – 11 August 2015

KEY FIGURES

17,500

Food packages distributed

1,014

Medical interventions provided

200

People provided with direct legal assistance

356

Unaccompanied minors identified

PRIORITIES

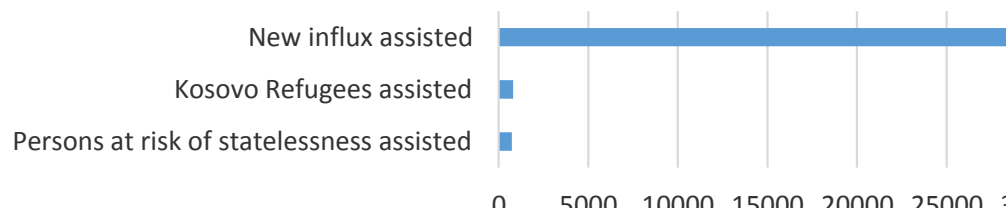
- Assist the Government and civil society in responding to the most urgent humanitarian and protection needs of the refugees
- Strengthen the asylum systems in the country in line with applicable international standards

HIGHLIGHTS

- A team of technical experts from UNHCR Headquarters is currently training Red Cross staff on the installation modalities for the refugee housing units (pre-fab containers). This will allow to build up the capacity of local staff to take over this role for future installations. (photos available [here](#))
- The Ministry of Interior in collaboration with UNHCR agreed on how to improve the overall registration procedure using a registration data base instead of paper based data collection. 12 new data entry clerks funded by UNHCR through the Macedonian Young Lawyers Association (MYLA) have been recruited to assist in speeding up the registration.

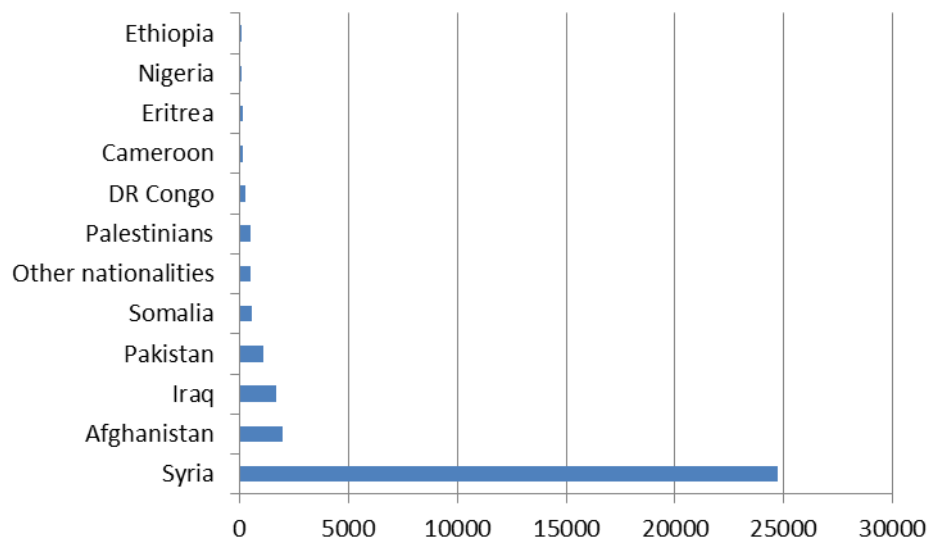
Population of concern (source: UNHCR)

A total of **33,318** people of concern



Intention to apply for asylum (source: Ministry of Interior)

A total of **31,774** applications have been filed from 19 June to 11 August 2015.



UPDATE ON ACHIEVEMENTS

Operational Context

The current average arrival rate in Gevgelija is increasing with an estimated 2,000 arrivals per day. During some days, the rate peaks at 2,200 persons per day. The Ministry of Interior registered a total of 31,774 persons as of 11 August 2015. 78% of the arrivals are Syrians, 6% Afghans, 5% Iraqis, 3% Pakistanis and the remainder represent other nationalities such as Somalis, Palestinians, Congolese and Cameroonians. 41 applications for asylum were registered out of which 31 were submitted by Syrians.



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Achievements

Protection

Achievements and Impact

- The Ministry of Interior in collaboration with UNHCR agreed on how to improve the overall registration procedure using a registration data base instead of paper based data collection. In addition to the two mobile teams already present at the train station in Gevgelija, 12 new data entry clerks working funded by UNHCR through MYLA have been recruited to assist in speeding up the registration. The clerks will work in several shifts to allow for maximum coverage. During the reporting period approximately 200 persons were offered free legal advice at the railway station. Also MYLA assisted 6 asylum seekers at the Vizbegovo Reception Center with their asylum procedure. These activities are funded by UNHCR.
- UNHCR will fund Open Gate La Strada to set up two outreach teams composed of an interpreter and a social worker to provide psychosocial first aid at the train station in Gevgelija. More severe cases will be referred to a psychologist. In addition, the teams will assist in identifying persons with specific needs and refer them, if need be, to the protection desk for further assistance. The recruitment process for the outreach team is currently ongoing.
- UNICEF will support 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 will be equipped with appropriate didactic material and toys to provide a child-friendly environment and identify and flag-out children in need of additional psychosocial support. The recruitment process for the team of two pedagogues and the procurement of child-friendly equipment is currently ongoing.
- Around 100 flyers with information in English and Arabic have been distributed by Help the Migrants in Macedonia.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- The establishment of a protection desk to ensure identification and referral for protection cases is advancing. The concept note has been agreed between Open Gate La Strada and UNHCR and two psychologists and social workers are currently being hired.

Health

Achievements and Impact

- During the reporting period the Red Cross provided 1014 medical interventions (out of which 111 were to pregnant women) at Gevgelija and Tabanovce. Three pregnant women were taken to the hospital, as well as 9 children under

the age of five. 965 children were additionally assisted (diapers, baby food, medicines, etc.) and 402 first aid kits were distributed. Four mobile teams of the Red Cross (two teams in each location) are working in two shifts to provide medical assistance and first aid. This activity is funded by UNHCR.

- The Ministry of Health provides voluntary vaccination at Gevgelija train station throughout the day.
- The mobile gynecology van provided by HERA and funded by UNFPA, which used to provide healthcare assistance in coordination with the Red Cross one day a week, has been out of order for the past 4 weeks. Efforts are made for the van to be fully functional as soon as possible. The van is still within the guarantee period and the required spare part has been ordered through the authorized dealer. At present the dealer shop is closed (vacation period), thus it is estimated that the van would be repaired at the end of August.

Food Security and Nutrition

Achievements and Impact

- The NGOs Nun and Legis with the support of individuals, are providing daily food packages and other products to the refugees. During the reporting period 2,000 food packages and 500 sandwiches per day have been distributed by volunteers working day and night shifts at Gevgelija and Tabanovce train stations, together with 10 kilograms of fruit. In addition, volunteers from the platform Help the Migrants in Macedonia have distributed 400 croissants and energy bars and 30 kilograms of bananas.
- In response to the increase of young children and women in the refugee flow, UNICEF facilitated the support from NGO SOS Children's Village in providing age specific food for the youngest and most vulnerable children. The donation made by SOS Children's Village will be distributed to children and mothers via the Red Cross teams present on the site.
- The Red Cross provided 485 food kits last week.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- The risk of a shortage in food distribution which is normally provided by local 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 and ten toilets are under construction in Tabanovce, funded by UNHCR.



Gevgelija WASH facilities progress on August 6th



Gevgelija WASH facilities progress on August 11th

- The Red Cross provided 4202 bottles of water and 666 hygienic parcels (for men, women and babies), and Help the Migrants in Macedonia also distributed 100 bottles of water.
- Legis and Help the Migrants in Macedonia distributed around 40 packages of baby wipes and 50 packages of regular wipes, 300 pieces of diapers and more than 100 sanitary napkins, and provided 25 packages of liquid soap.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- With an average of 2,000 arrivals passing daily through the train stations in Gevgelija and Tabanovce, the existing 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

- 45 railway workers sent a petition to the Mayor of Gevgelija and the Ministry of Transport. They urged to ensure the safety, security and health of staff working at the train station.

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.

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, Red Cross, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, and WHO.
- On August 7th, the regular field coordination meeting was organized in Gevgelija by the MLSP and UNHCR. All partners jointly agreed to produce flyers as part of an information campaign to avoid exploitation and abuse of refugees and inform about services and assistance available.
- The British Deputy Ambassador who visited Gevgelija train station on Thursday, 6 August, voiced his concern about the current situation and the interest to provide small scale funding for humanitarian partners active in the response. The delegation met also with the Mayor of Gevgelija, and visited the local hospital which is the referral hospital for the refugees. Consumables such as insulin and the repair of a broken ultrasound machine were highlighted as the most pressing needs.



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