

## KEY FIGURES

1 January 2015 - 4 February 2016

**448,379**

Registered intentions to apply for asylum

**30%**

of registered intentions were expressed by children

**2,083**

Applications for asylum

**81%**

of asylum applications were from the top ten refugee-producing countries

**2**

Persons granted refugee status

29 January – 4 February 2016

**9,935**

Registered intentions to seek asylum

**18**

Applications for asylum

**3,224**

First aid interventions provided

**3,844**

Pairs of footwear distributed

**4,321**

Winter jackets distributed

## 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

## FYR MACEDONIA

### INTER-AGENCY OPERATIONAL UPDATE

29 January – 4 February 2016

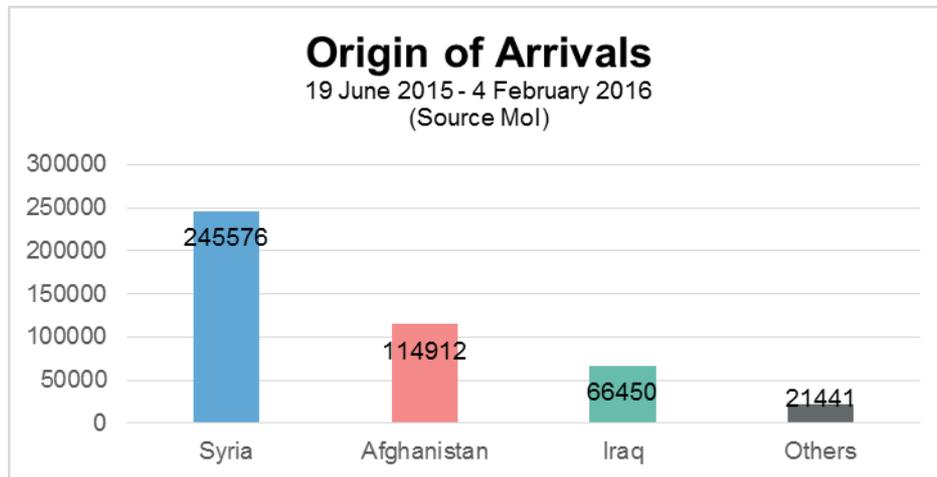
#### HIGHLIGHTS

- 9,935 refugees and migrants crossed the border into FYR Macedonia during the reporting period 29 January – 4 February 2016, with a daily average of 1,419. Since UNHCR began monitoring departures from Gevgelija on 1 July 2015 some **747,240** refugees and migrants have departed.
- In the period from 29 January – 4 February 2016, 18 applications for asylum were filed, while from 1 January 2015 to 4 February 2016, 2083 asylum applications were submitted out of which 1,005 (48%) were submitted by Syrians, 394 (19%) by Afghans, and 176 (8%) by Iraqis. So far only 2 persons have been recognised as refugees in 2015-2016, both unaccompanied children, one from Iraq and one from Syria.
- For the period 1 January – 4 February, 187 applications were registered, out of which 8 were submitted by Syrians, 36 by Afghans and 4 by Iraqis.
- During the reporting period, 40 people were returned from Vinojug transit centre, on the southern border of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, to the Greek border for possessing forged documents, no documents, or for being nationals of countries other than Afghanistan, Iraq, or Syria.
- Media in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia reported on 2 February that 27 Czech border police officers would be deployed to the southern border of the territory. They are expected to be in country until 19 March. According to the media, the Czech Republic has already also sent police officers to assist Hungary and Slovenia to help manage their borders.
- The Police Directors and Border Unit Heads from the FYR Macedonia, Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia and Austria met in Skopje on 3 February regarding the refugee and migrant crisis. The officials agreed to establish clear common criteria, which must be fulfilled for refugees to transit through the Western Balkans route. They agreed on the following: registration procedures and documents should be harmonised and standardised by all parties concerned; individual data should be collected in national databases through registration and exchanged across borders in a timely fashion; and persons who do not possess travel documents, who present forged documents, or persons who give false information about their nationality or identity will not be allowed to transit along the route ([press release of the Ministry of Interior here](#)).

## UPDATE ON ACHIEVEMENTS

### Operational Context

9,935 refugees and migrants crossed the border into FYR Macedonia during the reporting period 29 January – 4 February 2016, with a daily average of 1,419. Since UNHCR began monitoring the departures from Gevgelija on 1 July 2015 some **747,240** refugees and migrants have departed.



The Ministry of Interior's statistics of refugees and migrants declaring their intention to apply for asylum reached 448,379 including 135,892 (30%) children, of whom 18,237 (4% of total flow) were registered as unaccompanied since 19 June 2015 until 4 February 2016. Of these 245,576 (55%) of the arrivals are Syrians, 114,912 (25%) Afghans, 66,450 (15%) Iraqis, and the remaining (5%) represent other nationalities such as Iranians, Palestinians, Pakistanis, Somalis, Congolese and Bangladeshi.

### Achievements



#### Protection

#### Achievements and Impact

- The local launch of the Regional Refugee and Migrant Response plan took place in Skopje on 29 January 2016 under the leadership of UNHCR and IOM. The United Nations Resident Coordinator opened the session, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy shared remarks, and IOM and UNHCR presented an overview of the refugee and migrant population, as well as the details of the Plan. The priorities to be funded in 2016 are protection; food; health and nutrition; water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH); shelter; and non-food items such as winter clothing. Support to Gevgelija and Kumanovo is also planned. The plan, requested funding and more information can be found at <http://rmp-europe.unhcr.org/index.html>.



*RRMRP Presentation in Skopje. UNHCR/L.Brashnarska TCC Grand Plaza Hotel Skopje (FYR Macedonia) 29 January 2016*

- A Protection coordination meeting was held at the UNHCR office on 29 January in Skopje. UNHCR made an update on the implementation of the Child and Family Protection Support Hub (CFPSH) in the Vinojug reception centre and on the CwC (Communicating with Communities) UNHCR Innovation projects in fYR Macedonia. Concerns on the current practice of the registration of UAC were raised and discussed. It was agreed to re-establish the procedure to register UAC individually and to make the best interest principle a primary consideration in decisions affecting UACs.
- Following the protection coordination meeting held on 29 January in Skopje, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MSLP) together with the Sector for Asylum and UNHCR, organised a meeting with all protection partners in the Vinojug reception centre (Border Police, Crisis Management Centre, UNICEF, IOM, Red Cross RFL, La Strada) to discuss the registration of unaccompanied children (UAC). It was agreed that the UAC will be registered individually and issued their own registration documents.
- From 29 January – 4 February, approximately 2717 children and 1457 women were provided with support, including emotional and psychosocial assistance, in the UNICEF Child Friendly Space operated by the NGO La Strada in Vinojug. La Strada identified and assisted 137 vulnerable individuals. In Tabanovce, La Strada assisted and supported approximately 1512 children and 1362 women. The activities are funded by UNICEF, UNHCR, GIZ, Save the Children and Terre des Hommes. The La Strada team has been strengthened by UNICEF with additional staff in the day and night shifts.
- From 29 January – 4 February, approximately 1807 children and 954 women were provided with support, including emotional and psychosocial assistance in the Child Friendly Space operated by the SOS Children’s Village in Tabanovce. Additionally, 70 pregnant women were identified and assisted. The activities are funded by the SOS Kinderdorf International and UNICEF.
- During the reporting period, at the Vinojug site, 214 group leaders and around 10,200 refugees were given information about their rights and obligations in the country by MYLA, who also assisted 18 asylum seekers at the Vizbegovo Reception Center with their asylum procedure. MYLA also ensured prioritization in 35 cases, around 77 vulnerable individuals for their registration in Vinojug.
- During the reporting period, in close coordination with UNHCR, the Red Cross, La Strada and DRC staff in Tabanovce, 29 Extremely Vulnerable Individuals (EVI) and 94 members of their families/groups were transported by Mercy Corps from Tabanovce transit centre to the border with Serbia, and referred to the MSF team to be picked up at the border and to the Mercy Corps team at Miratovac RAP. The Mercy Corps Tabanovce team has been supported by volunteers of Operation Mercy and DRC, experienced in emergency work and work with EVIs.
- The first baby of the year was born in Gevgelija. During the three days the mother and baby stayed in the hospital, the father and three children stayed in UNICEF Child Friendly Space. MYLA’s lawyers assisted in procedures for the birth registration of the child and in obtaining an international birth certificate for the baby.
- UNHCR colleagues from Presevo and from UNHCR Skopje Field and Protection Units held a two day cross-border mission, one day in Presevo and Miratovac, and the other in Tabanovce to discuss issues related to reception conditions, protection and humanitarian assistance, protection of UAC, enhancement of the exchange of information, and coordination between the two offices.
- The Italian Ambassador visited the Vinojug reception centre on 4 February and was briefed by the Deputy Police Commander, Caritas, and UNHCR. Italy has provided funding to Caritas and UNHCR in 2015 for the fYR Macedonian emergency operation.
- The Military Attaché of the Austrian Embassy in Belgrade visited Vinojug, and was briefed by the UNHCR team on the situation in the reception centre, recent registration figures, the flow of people, and activities implemented so far in the centre.
- On 1-2 February, The Director of the UNICEF Office in Brussels and Samantha Mort, Senior Communications Advisor visited Tabanovce and Vinojug Transit centers.

### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- On 30 January, a taxi driver protest started in Gevgelija, which affected the pace of the refugee transit through the country. Taxi drivers blocked the railroad to protest that refugees were not permitted to travel to the northern border via taxi, but only by train. Interim measures had been reached periodically allowing refugees to travel by taxi and bus

in order to avoid overcrowding the site. As a consequence of the protest, the border police limited the number of refugees crossing from the Greek border into the country. Reportedly a decision was reached by the Crisis Management Centre in the evening of 3 February, whereby one train a day would transport refugees and the remaining people would be allowed to travel by taxi or bus to the Tabanovce transit site.

- During the reporting period, a number of people were sent from Serbia back to FYR Macedonia by the authorities. On 2 February, the Crisis Management Centre Manager organised an ad hoc coordination meeting with humanitarian partners to discuss the growing trend of returns from Serbia and other EU countries. The CMC informed that there are discussions on how to organize their transportation back to Greece.
- UNHCR received reports that some taxi drivers asked refugees they were transporting for extra money claiming it was to pay extra fees. Also, reportedly some taxis transported more than five people, maximum number authorized for one car, with some in the back of the car.



## Health

### Achievements and Impact

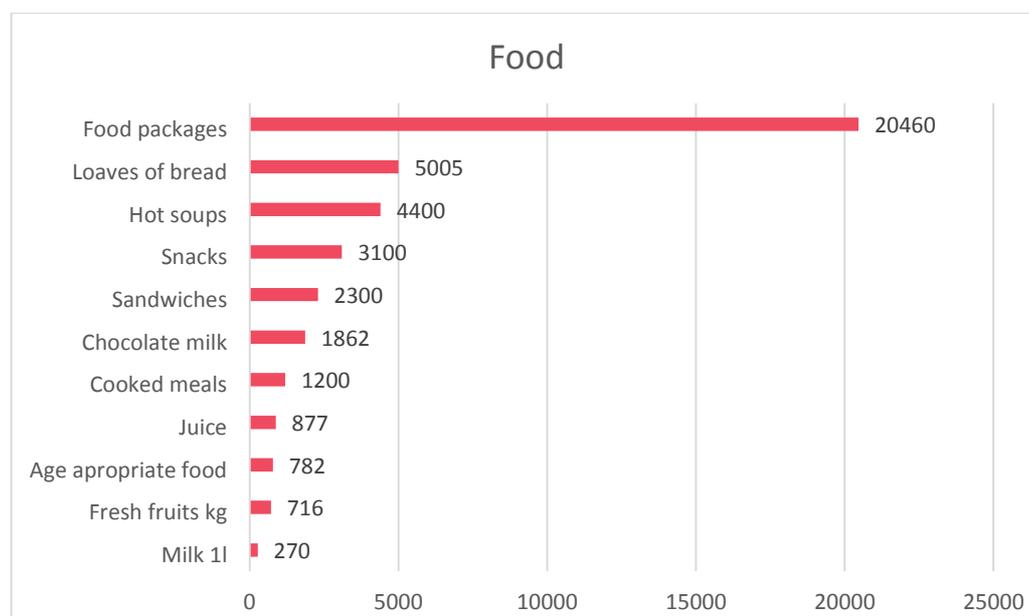
- During the reporting period the Red Cross assisted a total of 8,416 out of which 166 in favour of pregnant women and 491 in favor of children. In addition the teams provided 3,224 first aid interventions. The Red Cross is working in shifts to provide medical assistance and first aid in Gevgelija and Tabanovce 24/7. This activity is funded by UNHCR and the Red Cross.
- The UNHCR Senior Public Health Officer from Headquarters visited Tabanovce on 4 February in order to follow up on the situation regarding access to general public health care and public health response priorities including food, nutrition and water, sanitation and hygiene measures and response.



## Food Security and Nutrition

### Achievements and Impact

- Legis, Nun, Kalliri, Agape, Dorcas, La Strada, Help the Refugee in Macedonia, Caritas, UNHCR and Red Cross distributed:



- Age appropriate food is distributed in the child-friendly spaces in Gevgelija and Tabanovce, funded by UNICEF.

## Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

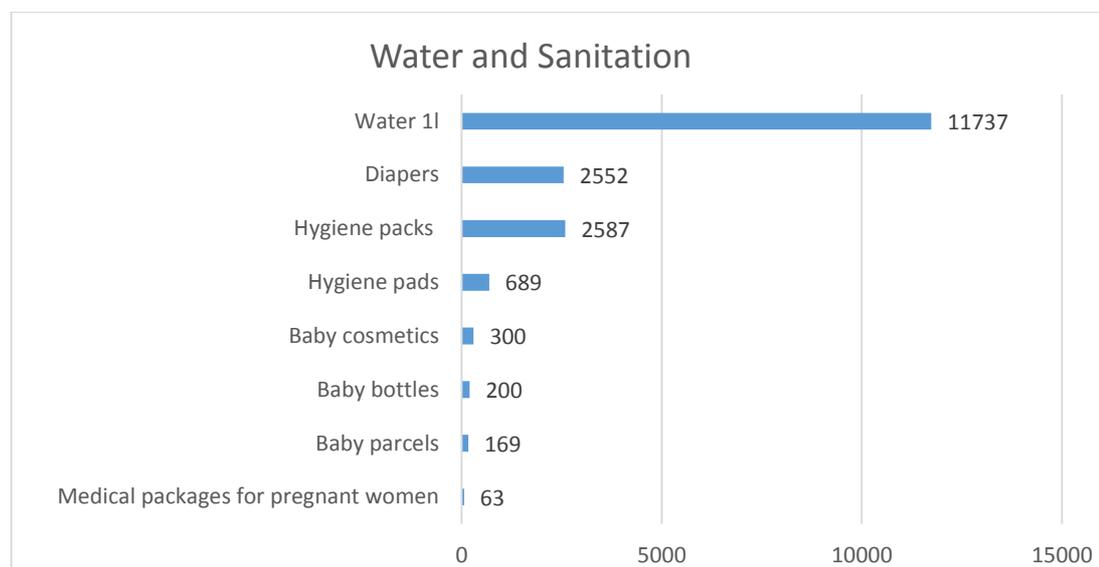
- During the reporting period, in Tabanovce the kitchen was not yet functional.



### Water and Sanitation

#### Achievements and Impact

- Red Cross, Help the Refugees in Macedonia, La Strada and other NGOs distributed:



- Construction of additional toilet blocs and the septic tank for the kitchen were ongoing in Vinojug.
- UNHCR re-installed men and women toilets signs in Vinojug to make them more visible.
- UNHCR WASH expert monitored ongoing construction activities in Tabanovce. New water tanks and toilets were being installed.
- Hygiene items were distributed in the child-friendly space in Tabanovce and Vinojug, funded by UNICEF.

## Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- DRC inspected the toilet block in Tabanovce. Two septic tanks were removed from the ground to check for damages.
- The construction of the toilet block outside the fence for arriving refugees has been stopped until final details are agreed among UNICEF, MCIC and the Municipality of Gevgelija.



### Communication and Information

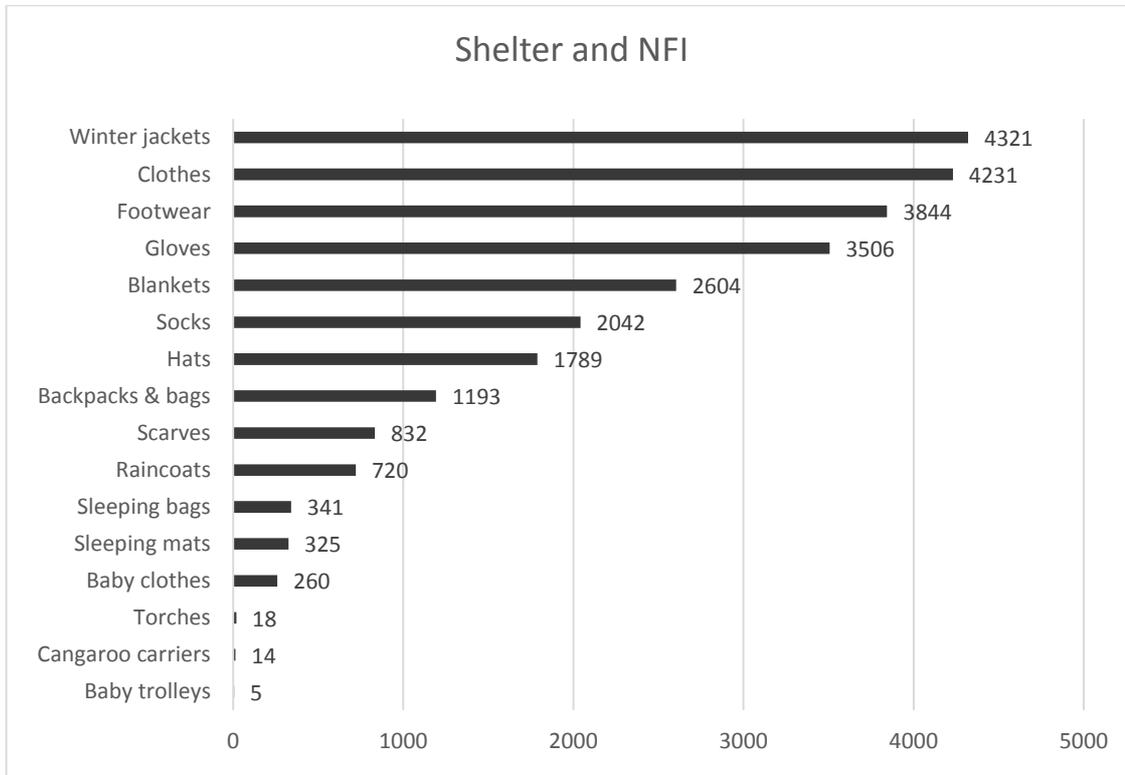
#### Achievements and Impact

- A UNHCR team from the Emergency Lab/Innovation Unit focusing on Communicating with Communities (CwC) arrived on 4th February to continue supporting the CwC UNHCR Innovation projects in FYR Macedonia, including: provide support to set up additional TV screens at Vinojug & Tabanovce sites and development of content, support to loudspeaker system(s), follow-up testing of Google Translation Cards mobile application, support to strengthening feedback mechanisms.

## Shelter and NFIs

### Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR, Red Cross, La Strada, Nun, Legis, Help the Refugees in Macedonia and UNICEF distributed:



- IOM delivered 50 bunkbeds with mattresses for containers in Vinojug reception centre. At Vinojug reception centre there are 5 IOM containers which have been fully equipped with 3 double beds each and a heater (6 persons per container = 30 beds installed in total).
- The Red Cross started a new supply chain management procedure where they will report on all of the assets that enter Vinojug and UNHCR will monitor the procedure before they are added to the stock.
- The lighting on the roof covering the space between the two Rubb halls near the train station in Vinojug was completed.
- Construction of the new NFI distribution point was ongoing in Vinojug.



Refugee received a new UNHCR sleeping bag in Vinojug.  
©UNHCR/I.Ciobanu Vinojug reception centre (fYR Macedonia) 29  
January 2016

### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- The Red Cross was unable to obtain gas to fill up the heater gas tanks on 1 February in Vinojug. In the meantime, they distributed a larger number of jackets and blankets to help keep people warm.
- The stock of baby slings in Gevgelija ran out due to high demand. At the same time, the item is difficult to obtain in fYR Macedonia.

## Working in partnership

### Achievements and Impact

There were no weekly coordination meetings during the reporting period. A coordination meeting for protection took place in Skopje on 29 January.

Partners working with the Ministries and municipalities to provide protection and assistance to refugees are: Agape, ASB, Caritas, Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Macedonia, Danish Caritas, DRC, Dorcas, Euro Human, GIZ, Grain of Goodness, Habitat for Humanity, Help the Refugees in Macedonia, HERA, IOM, JRS, Kalliri, La Strada Open Gate, Legis, MCMS (Macedonian Centre for International Cooperation), Mercy Corps, Merhamet, MYLA, Nun, Operation Mercy, People in need, Red Cross, Samaritan's Purse, Secours Islamique France, SOS Children's Village, Télécoms Sans Frontières (TSF), Terre des hommes, Vlaznia Kumanovo, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF and WHO.



*Red Cross assisting extremely vulnerable people with transport to the border to Serbia. ©UNHCR Tabanovce (fYR Macedonia) 29 January 2016*

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