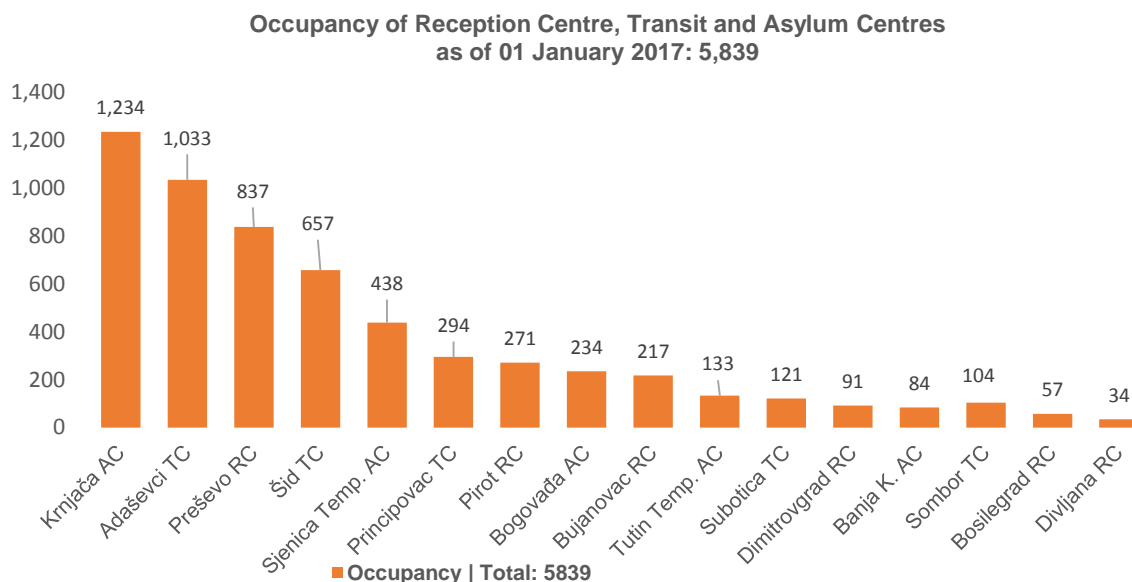


HIGHLIGHTS AND STATISTICS

- Overall count of new refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants presently in Serbia stood at 7,000, with over 5,800 (i.e. 83%) accommodated in 16 governmental facilities (see chart), and the remainder sleeping rough in Belgrade City centre or at the border with Hungary.
- Tragic incidents again highlighted the serious risks refugees and migrants face in the hands of smugglers and the need for greater access to safe pathways. In one incident, an Iraqi asylum seeker reported that smugglers forced him to abandon his sister in the mountains as they crossed from Bulgaria as she could no longer walk. He provided Serbian authorities with details of the incident and GPS coordinates but unfortunately, she had passed away before she could be rescued. On 29 December, a vehicle reportedly driven by a smuggler carrying 17 refugees from Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan, of which nine children, crashed in Eastern Serbia, and according to available information, left one woman and two children dead and several others in serious condition. The survivors were all immediately taken care of by the medical services in Nis (East), and UNHCR and partners provided additional support and assistance. The relatives of the victims living in Europe also came to visit and support their relatives.
- Supporting access to better accommodation and services as well as the decongesting of Belgrade city centre, UNHCR and partners assisted 89 newly-registered asylum seekers with transport from Belgrade to the centres in the East.
- 74 asylum-seekers were admitted into the two Hungarian “transit zones”. Under 100 are awaiting admission outside the zones on Serbian territory. UNHCR and partners received reports of over 195 foreign nationals claiming to have been collectively expelled from Hungary and 12 from Croatia, after entering these countries irregularly.
- UNHCR, authorities and partners organized various New Year’s activities and gift distribution for refugee children in the centres throughout the country.
- 258 refugees/migrants registered intent to seek asylum, bringing the total for the month of December to 1,120, and for the year to 12,961.



EAST

On 01 January, over 450 asylum seekers were accommodated in four government centres: 91 asylum seekers at Reception Centre in Dimitrovgrad, 57 at Bosilegrad, 271 in Pirot and since 29 December, at least 34 in the new centre in Divljana. Around half of them are children.

The authorities provide assistance in food and medical services, and local civil society is available for support in non-food items, interpretation and counselling.

SOUTH

Over 1,050 refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants were accommodated in two Reception Centres (RC): Presevo (837) and Bujanovac (217). Some 46% of residents of Presevo RC are from Afghanistan, 30% from Iraq, 13% from Pakistan, and 8% from Syria. Residents of Bujanovac RC, which accommodates only families and unaccompanied and separated children, are from Iraq (38%), Syria (32%) and Afghanistan (20%), with 12% others.

UNHCR and other organizations assisted with food and non-food items, medical services, counselling, interpretation, referrals and recreational activities. Upon request of authorities, UNHCR and Indigo continued to support the Centre for Social Work in conducting Best Interest Assessments for unaccompanied and separated children.

UNHCR, authorities and partners organized a number of New Year's activities for the residents of the two RCs but also for some local organizations, such as the Home for Elderly and children with special needs in Vranje, where they distributed New Year's presents to their beneficiaries.

BELGRADE

According to the authorities, over 1,200 refugees/migrants slept rough in the city centre, while Krnjaca Asylum Centre sheltered 1,234 asylum-seekers on 28 December.

Humanitarian agencies provided counselling, referrals and transport to accommodation in governmental centres, registration with the police, child protection and medical services.

WEST

Transit Centres (TCs) in the West sheltered 1,984 refugees and migrants: 1,033 in Adasevci, 657 in Sid and 294 in Principovac.

Civil society organizations assisted the SCRM with food, non-food and medical aid, counselling, referrals, child support, and recreational activities. A sixth round of treatment for body lice/scabies in all three TCs was completed, significantly reducing the number of affected individuals.

NORTH

Around 350 asylum seekers were counted in the North on 01 January: 121 in Subotica TC and 104 in Sombor TC, while the number of those camping in the open on Serbian soil close to the two Hungarian "transit zones" near Horgos I and Kelebija border-crossings was 92.

UNHCR and partners provided humanitarian aid, including food, non-food aid, hygiene packages, support to maintenance of the sanitary conditions, medical assistance, referrals, as well as legal and other counselling.



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