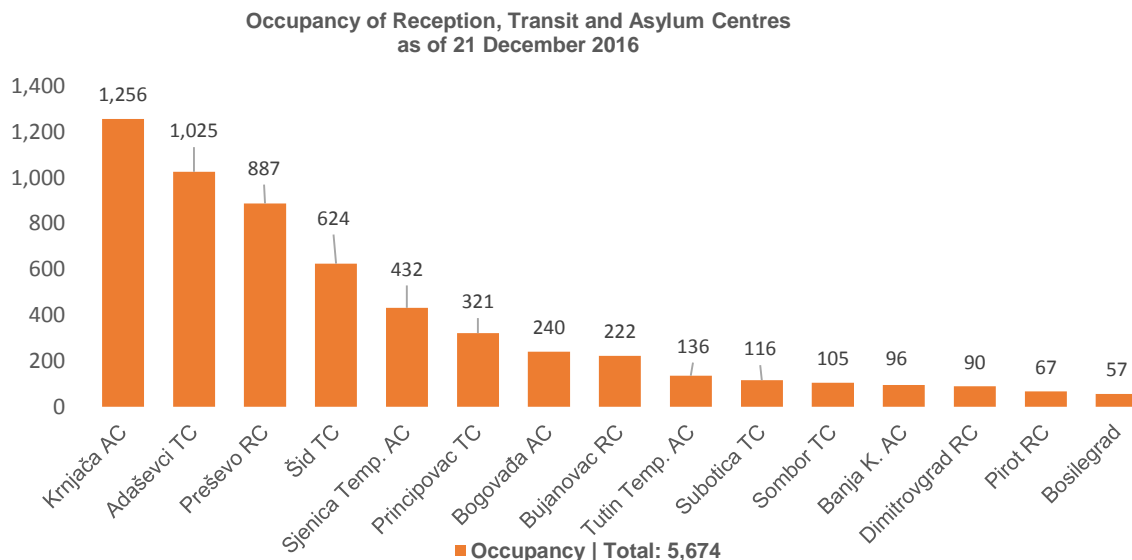


HIGHLIGHTS AND STATISTICS

- Authorities, UNHCR, and partners encountered close to 7,000 refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants. Over 5,670 (i.e. 81%) were accommodated in governmental facilities (see chart), while the remainder were counted sleeping rough in Belgrade City centre or at the border with Hungary. With the centre in Pirot receiving its first residents this week, there are now 15 government centers sheltering refugees, asylum seekers and migrants.
- Supporting access to better accommodation and services as well as the decongesting of Belgrade city centre, UNHCR and partners assisted 65 newly registered asylum seekers with transport from Belgrade to Pirot.
- UNHCR is grateful to the German authorities for granting visas to two minor sisters from Syria under family reunification procedure. The two refugee girls departed Serbia on 21 December to join their father in Germany. UNHCR continues to promote and facilitate orderly legal pathways for refugees to safeguard family unity and access effective protection, which we hope to scale-up with increased registration, asylum-requests and -recognitions in Serbia.
- 57 asylum-seekers were admitted into the two Hungarian “transit zones”. Around 100 are awaiting admission outside the zones on Serbian territory. UNHCR and partners received reports of over 150 foreign nationals claiming to have been collectively expelled from Hungary and 17 from Croatia, reportedly without having been granted access to asylum procedures there.
- Regarding the reported incident concerning a Syrian refugee family that had been taken to a remote location near the border with Bulgaria on 17 December and left there until they were rescued, UNHCR has been able to corroborate with the family the key facts of the incident. The family of seven, including two women and two children, were holding valid Intention to Seek Asylum Certificates issued by the authorities in Belgrade. On their way to the Reception Centre in Bosilegrad in Eastern Serbia, as directed by Serbian authorities, they were taken off the public bus on which they had been traveling, reportedly by joint security forces, and transported to a remote area in proximity to the Bulgarian border and left there without any provisions or any other means of surviving in deep snow and temperatures which reached -11 degrees Celsius. UNHCR is awaiting the outcome of the authorities’ investigation into the case and decision on any consequent disciplinary measures, considering this incident could have had tragic consequences for the refugee family and that the alleged conduct would constitute a violation of Serbia’s responsibilities under international and national law.
- 100 refugees/migrants registered intent to seek asylum, bringing the total for the month of December to 767, and for the year to 12,608.



EAST

On 21 December, a total of 214 asylum seekers were accommodated in three government centres: 90 asylum seekers at Reception Centre in Dimitrovgrad, 57 at Bosilegrad, and 67 in Pirot. 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 1,100 refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants were accommodated in two Reception Centres (RC): Presevo (887) and Bujanovac (222). 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.

BELGRADE

According to the authorities, over 1,200 refugees/migrants slept rough in the city centre, while Krnjaca Asylum Centre sheltered 1,256 asylum-seekers.

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

WEST



Children's party at Adasevci Transit Centre, (Serbia)@UNHCR, 21 December 2016

Transit Centres (TCs) in the West sheltered 1,970 refugees and migrants: 1,025 in Adasevci, 624 in Sid and 321 in Principovac.

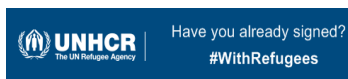
Civil society organizations assisted the SCRM with food, non-food and medical aid, counselling, referrals, child support, and recreational activities. SOS Children Village organized end of the year party and gift distribution for the children at all three TCs.

A sixth round of treatment and screening for body lice is planned to take place next week in the three locations.

NORTH

Around 340 asylum seekers were counted in the North on 21 December: 116 in Subotica TC and 105 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 over 100.

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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