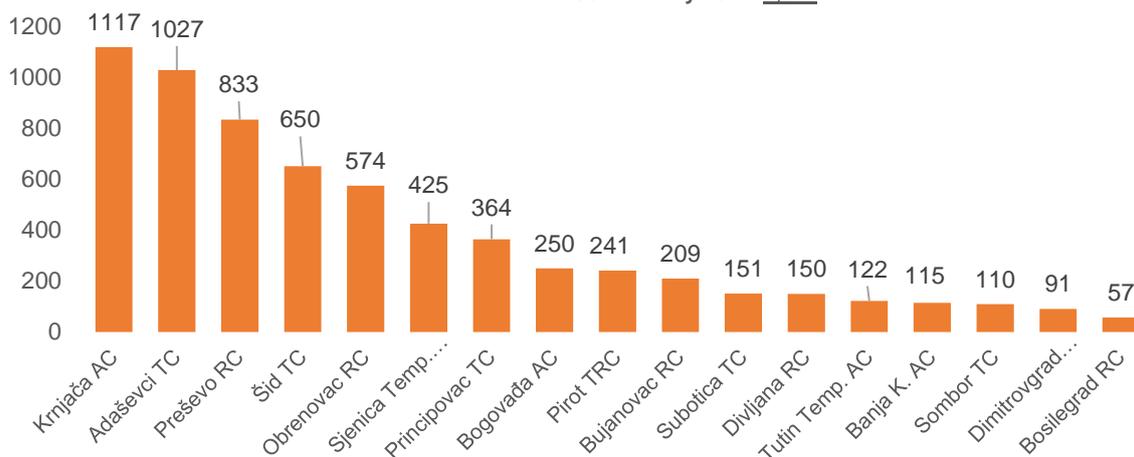


HIGHLIGHTS AND STATISTICS

- The overall number of refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants counted in Serbia stood around 7,700. Close to 6,500 (85%) of them were sheltered in 17 heated government facilities. The others were staying rough in Belgrade city centre or in the North near the Hungarian border.
- Two horrible accidents again illustrated the risks of refugees and migrants trying to cross borders irregularly: on 02 February, up to 12 migrant men in Sid, while trying to enter an international cargo train to Croatia, accidentally triggered an electric wire which caused a massive explosion, seriously injuring at least four men from Algeria. The men were hospitalized with internal and external burns, where two remain in critical condition. The second accident took place on 03 February, when a group of 15 to 20 Afghan men and boys, led by Pakistani smugglers were trying to cross into Hungary over the frozen Tisa River. Reportedly, the ice broke and they fell into the water. One man remains missing, feared to have drowned.
- At the same time, a collective expulsion from Serbia into Bulgaria, which allegedly took place on 03 February raised serious concerns. 25 refugees from Afghanistan, mainly families with children, who wished to seek asylum in Serbia and upon request of the court in Pirot had been issued referrals by the Police to be accommodated in the government reception centre of Divljana, were reportedly expelled to Bulgaria instead. UNHCR brought this incident to the attention of responsible Serbian authorities, requesting appropriate investigation and follow-up.
- Efforts to resolve the situation of refugee/migrant men and boys squatting in Belgrade city centre continued. UNHCR and partners supported authorities in a rapid refurbishment to expand the capacity of the new centre in Obrenovac. While no further official transfers to Obrenovac took place, lower numbers of men and boys sleeping rough were observed in Belgrade city centre. UNHCR and partners managed to transport 24 more newly registered asylum seekers from Belgrade to other government centres.
- Hungarian authorities admitted 22 asylum seekers to territory and asylum procedures at the Hungarian “transit zones” near Kelebija and Horgos border crossings. Many refugees and migrants across Serbia grow increasingly restless about decreasing admission numbers and rising waiting periods, indicating that more may try to cross borders irregularly instead.
- During the last four days over 60 asylum-seekers informed UNHCR and partners to have been denied access to asylum procedures in Hungary and Croatia but instead been collectively expelled back into Serbia, many alleging serious maltreatment by the authorities of these EU member states.
- In January, 584 intentions to seek asylum in Serbia were registered: 48% by men, 12% by women and 40% for children. Applications were filed by citizens of Afghanistan (50%), Iraq (17%), Syria (13%), Pakistan (10%), or other countries (10%). No first-instance decisions were issued.

Occupancy of Asylum, Reception and Transit Centres
 as of 05 February 2017: 6,486





EAST

On 05 February, over 530 asylum seekers were accommodated in four government centres: 91 in the Reception Centre in Dimitrovgrad, 57 in Bosilegrad, 241 in Pirot and 150 in Divljana. Most are from Iraq, followed by Afghanistan and Syria and around half of them are children.

Authorities provided food and medical services, while NGOs were available for support in non-food items, interpretation and counselling.

Exhausted asylum-seeker children, sleeping on the floor of the court in Pirot, before being expelled back into Bulgaria, Pirot (Serbia), ©UNHCR, 6 Feb 2017

SOUTH

1,042 refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants were accommodated in two Reception Centres (RC): Presevo (833) and Bujanovac (209).

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

BELGRADE

Around 2,700 refugees and migrants were counted in Belgrade.

Some 1,000 men and boys remain sleeping rough in the city centre, of which 65 boys in MSF tents. Krnjaca AC sheltered 1,117 asylum-seekers. The new facility in Obrenovac accommodated 574 refugees and migrants, including over 270 unaccompanied or separated boys. On 04 February, the UNHCR Representative was invited by Minister of Labour, Employment, Social and Veteran affairs Vulin to accompany a visit to Obrenovac by the EUD Ambassador and eight ambassadors of the EU Member States.

Humanitarian agencies provided life-saving aid, counselling, support to registration with the police, as well as referrals to child protection and medical services in the city centre.

WEST

Transit Centres (TCs) in the West sheltered 2,041 refugees and migrants: 1,027 in Adasevci, 650 in Sid and 364 in Principovac.

Civil society organizations assisted authorities with food, non-food and medical aid, counselling, referrals, child support and recreational activities.

NORTH

Subotica TC sheltered 151 asylum-seekers and Sombor TC 110, while only six asylum seekers camped at Horgos and seven at Kelebija border sites, awaiting admission into Hungarian "transit zones".

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.

Groups of unregistered migrant men from North Africa, Pakistan and Afghanistan, sleeping rough around Subotica intending to irregularly enter Hungary, continue being observed.

The 2017 UNHCR Serbia Operation is grateful for funding by:



and private donors in Spain