

Aegean Islands

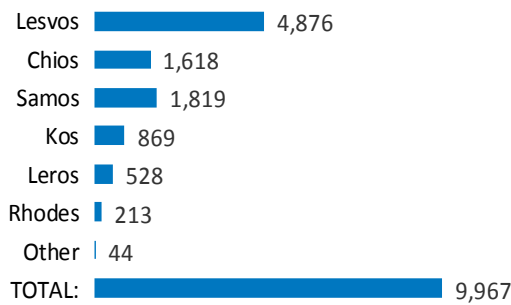
Arrivals increased in August to **3,600 people** arriving mainly to Samos, Lesvos, and Chios. The majority were **from Syria and Iraq, while 62 per cent** are **women and children**.

Asylum-seekers are staying amidst **deteriorating conditions in overcrowded sites** on Samos, Lesvos, and Chios despite **UNHCR transfers to the mainland doubling** this month.

As **national authorities assume full management** of services in the hotspots, **UNHCR called for further robust action** and urgent deployment of more staff.

POPULATION OF CONCERN

Host Islands

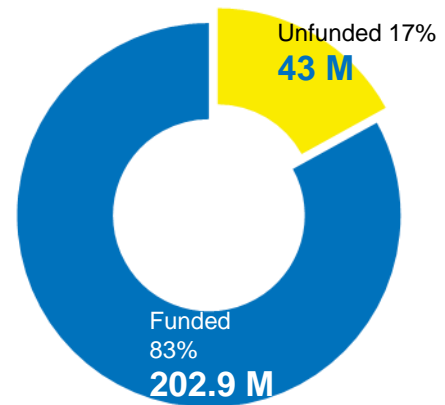


* Source: UNHCR Greece as of 31 August

FUNDING (AS OF 18 SEPTEMBER)

USD 245.9 M

requested for the Greece situation



UNHCR PRESENCE

Staff:

61 National Staff
8 International Staff

Offices:

1 Islands Unit in Athens
1 Sub Office on Lesvos
5 Field Offices on Chios, Samos, Kos, Leros and Rhodes



UNHCR supported continuing efforts of Chios Municipality to responsibly close the Souda site. Photo: UNHCR/ Ann Maria Pitropaki.

Working with Partners

UNHCR supports the Government of Greece who coordinates the refugee response. The Office works with other UN agencies, international and national NGOs, state institutions, community-based organisations, refugees, and host communities through sectoral working groups on [Lesvos](#), [Chios](#), [Samos](#), [Kos](#) and [Leros](#).

Main Activities

UNHCR supports the Government of Greece in the reception of new arrivals, asylum procedures and providing solutions to refugees.

Protection

- UNHCR provides information on rights and obligations, the asylum procedure and offers legal counselling and representation to asylum-seekers through partners. UNHCR identifies and refers people with specific needs to responsible authorities and service providers for targeted assistance.

Sexual and Gender Based Violence

- UNHCR builds the capacity of humanitarian organisations and authorities on sexual and gender based violence (SGBV) prevention and response, organises awareness campaigns and conducts trainings to actors from various sectors on how to integrate SGBV guidelines in their everyday work.
- UNHCR and partners have also developed referral pathways so that survivors of SGBV receive appropriate help.

Child Protection

- UNHCR supports the identification of children at risk and assists in building the expertise of national and local actors. UNHCR coordinates with humanitarian actors and stakeholders to monitor and develop Standard Operating Procedures and minimum standards to enhance the protection of children.
- According to EKKA, approximately 223 unaccompanied or separated children remain in the Reception and Identification Centres on the islands, known as 'hotspots', awaiting their transfer to shelters appropriate to their age and needs.

Education

- UNHCR is working with partners to explore options for non-formal education where formal education is not yet available, and is running recreational spaces ensuring that the development and well-being of refugee children and youth is supported in a conducive learning environment.
- In collaboration with the University of Aegean on [Lesvos](#) and [Samos](#), UNHCR facilitates language classes in 12 European languages to adult and children asylum-seekers through the European Commission's online learning programme.

- On **Samos**, an education container was donated by UNHCR in the Vathy hotspot to be used as a kindergarten by the Ministry of Education as the first educational space inside the centre.

Health

- In anticipation of the full deployment of medical staff on the islands under the Ministry of Health, the significant delays in the vulnerability assessment are particularly concerning as these are essential to identifying people with special needs and an important component of the asylum procedures. Indicatively, since mid-August, there has been no doctor present in the hotspot of **Kos**. Many of the people have been staying on the islands for months and the dire conditions have affected their physical and mental health.
- In Kara Tepe and Souda on **Lesvos** and **Chios** respectively, UNHCR offers health services to the residents.

Food Security

- On **Lesvos** and **Chios**, UNHCR provides food to the population of Kara Tepe and Souda.

Shelter, Water, Sanitation and CRIs

- Shelter structures on all islands are under severe pressure with some hundreds of people, including vulnerable and families living in makeshift shelters, exposed to serious protection risks including sexual and gender-based violence. Especially on **Samos**, over 1,600 are crammed in the hotspot with a capacity for 700, including some 600 children and 60 unaccompanied children, as well as pregnant women, serious medical cases and people with disabilities.
- On **Lesvos**, UNHCR concluded its part of the infrastructural upgrade of Moria hotspot with the delivery of three WASH containers.
- On **Chios**, UNHCR and the Municipality are further reducing the population in Souda with transfers of eligible people to improved accommodation on the island and the mainland, while twelve large UNHCR tents were set up to ease conditions in Vial hotspot. No new arrivals have been accommodated since 25 May and no women or children remain in the site.
- In August, some 7,638 core relief items (CRIs) were provided by UNHCR to the authorities on the Aegean islands in order to cover necessary gaps.

Communication with Communities

- UNHCR, in coordination with site management authorities on the islands, convenes on a regular basis community discussions. These platforms serve as a dual channel of communication among asylum-seekers, humanitarian actors and authorities where issues, such as hygiene and childcare are discussed.
- UNHCR on the islands provides leaflets in different languages with information about the asylum procedures and access to key services. On **Chios**, UNHCR organized a training for women refugees to better identify signs of trafficking and protect themselves.

Peaceful coexistence

- UNHCR organises events and implements projects that bring closer the refugee and local population and help build bridges of trust and mutual understanding.
- UNHCR donated **twelve** prefabricated containers to the Municipality of **Lesvos** and the North Aegean Region as support to the affected local community after the 6,1 Richter scale earthquake. The majority were used as classrooms for the kindergarten and elementary schools.
- On **Samos**, UNHCR installed two water heaters and undertook maintenance works of the heating system at the pediatric clinic of Vathy public hospital. The hospital had been operating without hot water for some years.

ESTIA Accommodation and Cash assistance

- In August, UNHCR provided dignified housing on the islands to some 803 people in apartments and buildings. Urban accommodation facilitates eventual integration of those who will remain in Greece, while the host population benefits from rentals.
- Some 7,801 people benefited from partial cash assistance to cover some basic needs, such as clothes, educational material, transportation and communications, and to restore a sense of normalcy in their lives.
- UNHCR works with the Government, local authorities and NGOs to provide urban accommodation and cash assistance to asylum-seekers and refugees through the ECHO-funded Emergency Support to Integration and Accommodation (ESTIA).

Logistics

- In August, UNHCR assisted the transfer of 1,945 asylum-seekers from the islands to rented accommodation and open sites on the mainland. Since June 2016, UNHCR has coordinated and covered the cost of 12,246 such transfers, which help alleviate the overcrowded conditions in the sites of the islands.
- UNHCR offers local transportation from remote sites to key facilities and the Regional Asylum Offices on the islands in order to ensure that asylum-seekers have access to the asylum procedure and necessary services.

Partners

- UNHCR on the islands supports the Government to manage the refugee situation by working with the international and national partners Danish Refugee Council, International Rescue Committee, Doctors of the World, Save the Children, Samaritan's Purse, Metadrasi, Arsis, Praksis and Iliaktida.

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Special thanks to the major donors of unrestricted and regional funds in 2017

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Thanks to the donors for the Greece operation

European Union (200 M) | Spain (2 M) | Fondation BNP Paribas (0.4 M) | Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (0.3 M)

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