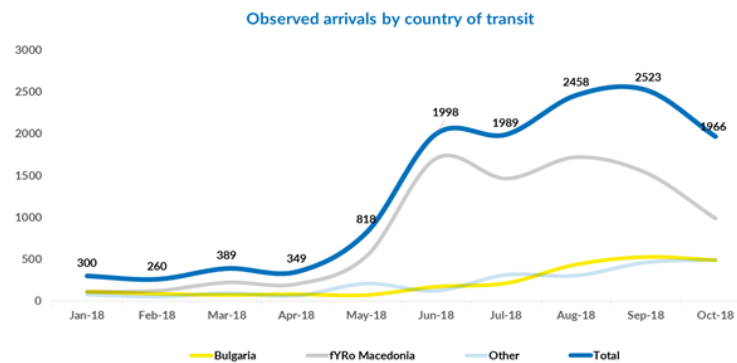


SERBIA UPDATE

- **3,919 new refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants** were counted in Serbia on 28 October, a slight increase from 3,825 counted two weeks ago. **3,485** (i.e. 89%) of them were accommodated in 15 governmental Reception/Transit (RTC) or Asylum Centres (AC). Also, close to **450** mainly male refugees/migrants were observed outside centres: 200 in Belgrade City, some 160 camping close to borders with Croatia or Hungary and up to 70 in Loznica, close to the border with Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- The number of **newly arriving** refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants grew again: to **1,207** observed or assisted by UNHCR and partners in Serbia 15-28 October (compared to 751 during the preceding fortnight). 40% were nationals of Afghanistan (increase from 34% in the preceding two weeks), 28% of Pakistan (up from 19%) and 17% of Iran (down from 33%). 83% were men, 5% women and 12% were children, including 101 Unaccompanied and Separated Children (UASC). 58% arrived from fYRo Macedonia (up from 38%), 22% from Bulgaria (down from 29%), 16% by air (down from 30%), and 4% from other destinations. The following chart visualises arrival trends from January to 28 October:



- UNHCR and partners received **678** reports of collective expulsions (compared to 1,064 in the preceding fortnight): 324 from Croatia (down from 809), 278 from BiH (up from 207), 11 from Hungary (down from 27) and 12 from Romania (down from 19).
- As in the preceding fortnight, Hungarian authorities admitted 9 asylum seekers from Serbia into territory and procedures in their so-called “transit zones” at Horgos and Kelebija border crossings.
- On 17 October, the decision of the Government of Serbia to reintroducing visa for Iranian nationals entered into effect. UNHCR and partners are monitoring the situation.
- On 23 October, some 300 mainly male residents of Adasevci and Principovac RTCs peacefully gathered at Batrovci border crossing demanding to cross into Croatia. Apparently, their move was triggered by rumours that the Croatian border would be opened. Having realizing that these rumours were untrue and counselled by the Serbian Commissariat for Refugees and Migration (SCRM), UNHCR and partners, in the afternoon they accepted the offer of the SCRM to transport them back to their respective centres.
- On 23 October, the SCRM warned the public of fake news spreading on social networks after the Ministry of Interior had confirmed that there had been NO attack by a group of migrants on a girl in the centre of Belgrade. UNHCR joins the SCRM in deploring the creation and spreading of such misinformation fostering hatred and xenophobia against refugees and migrants.
- Some 400 UASC are accommodated in government facilities, most in Krnjaca AC. On 22 October, authorities started relocating UASC to Sjenica AC.
- The police in the South are yet to register and issue with certificates of intent to seek asylum almost half of residents of RTCs (especially Bujanovac RTC).



Refugees, migrants and local citizens met in Pirot to play chess

- In Pirot, UNHCR, partners and authorities organized two – very popular – chess tournaments for refugees/migrants from the RTC Pirot and the local population. Symbolic awards were presented to the youngest, the oldest and the three highest-ranked players.
- RTC Adasevci re-opened a third rub hall to accommodate high number of single men arriving there. High occupancy - now with 630 residents - reportedly caused security incidents as well as sanitation issues.
- On 15-19 October, upon invitation by the Ministry of Defense, UNHCR Serbia contributed on Civil-Military Cooperation to the Regional Exercise-REGEX 18 training event, organized by the Serbian Army in cooperation with NATO within the Partnership for Peace programme.
- On 19 October, joined by the Ministry of Labor, Employment, Social and Veteran Affairs, Asylum Office, SCRM, EU Delegation in Serbia (EUD) and Croatian Legal Center, UNHCR chaired the third Refugee Protection Working Group for this year. It gathered representatives of authorities, international organizations, NGOs and donors to discuss pertinent protection issues with the following agenda: update on the asylum and migration situation by the Serbian authorities, brief by the EUD and presentation on access to territory and border practices by the Croatian Legal Center.

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