EUROPE MONTHLY REPORT

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Solidarity in action: Local volunteers accompany a resettled Syrian refugee family on a day trip to the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao. Story on page 7.

TRENDS AND KEY FIGURES

MEDITERRANEAN ROUTES[1]: 112,600 refugees and migrants arrived via the three Mediterranean routes to Europe from January to November 2019. This represents a 14% decrease compared to the same period last year (131,000). In November, 14,000 refugees and migrants arrived via these routes, which is a 39% increase compared to November 2018 and a 20% decrease compared to October 2019.

GREECE: Sustaining a high trend of arrivals to Greece over the last months, in November alone, some 9,800 people arrived by sea (8,300) and land (1,500), three times more than this time last year. In 2019, the highest number of monthly arrivals to Greece was reported in September (12,500). From January to November, 38% of arrivals were from Afghanistan and 28% from the Syrian Arab Republic.

At the end of November, UNHCR estimated the number of refugees and migrants in Greece at 109,000. A record number of 38,800 refugees and migrants are on the islands, of which 34,000 are living in the five Reception and Identification Centers (RICs), six times more than their total capacity of 5,400 people. More details can be found in the UNHCR Greece November Factsheet.

SPAIN: At end November 2019, some 29,700 refugees and migrants had arrived in Spain, 50% less than in the same period last year (59,800). In November, 2,400 people arrived to Spain. After a peak of 4,600 arrivals in January 2019, the highest number of arrivals this year was reported in October (4,000). Arrivals were from Morocco (30%), Algeria (15%) and Guinea (13%). More information as of November in the UNHCR Spain Factsheet and UNHCR Spain weekly snapshot.

Mediterranean
112,600
arrivals in 2019

1,243
estimated dead/missing in 2019

Greece			Italy		
66,900			**10,900**		
12,530	10,983	9,845	2,499	2,016	1,223
Sept	Oct	Nov	Sept	Oct	Nov

Spain			Malta		
29,700			**3,300**		
3,794	4,020	2,383	503	406	191
Sept	Oct	Nov	Sept	Oct	Nov

Cyprus
1,800

125	326	331
Sept	Oct	Nov

Data source: UNHCR Operational Portal data.unhcr.org/mediterranean as of 30 November 2019.

[1] Arrivals via Mediterranean Routes include Cyprus, Italy and Malta; Greece and Spain both include sea and land arrivals; Spain includes sea arrivals in the Mediterranean and to the Canary Islands.

ITALY: Some 10,900 refugees and migrants arrived by sea from January to November 2019, a 53% decrease from 23,000 in the same period of 2018. Top countries of origin in 2019 were Tunisia (24%), Pakistan (11%) and Côte d'Ivoire (10%). In November, 1,233 individuals reached Italian shores, compared to 980 in November 2018. For the third consecutive month, arrivals are higher than during the same months in 2018. More information is available in the UNHCR Italy November dashboard on sea arrivals.

MALTA: The number of arrivals to Malta has increased significantly as a result of disembarkations of people rescued in the Central Mediterranean after departing from Libya. From January to November 2019, some 3,300 refugees and migrants arrived in Malta, almost four times the number recorded at this time last year. Most people were from Sudan (40%), Eritrea (7%), and Nigeria (6%).

CYPRUS: From January to November 2019, some 1,800 refugees and migrants arrived in Cyprus by sea, three times more than in the same period in 2018 (542). Top countries of origin were Syria, Cameroon and Nigeria. Two boat arrivals in November with more than 120 persons each have put a strain on the first-line reception facility, surpassing its maximum capacity of 350 people and requiring temporary arrangements.

WESTERN BALKANS[2]: 5,152 people are estimated to have arrived or transited on the way to other countries in November 2019, 16% less than in October. With these, 49,784 individuals are estimated to have arrived or transited through the Western Balkans unitl the end of November 2019, a 27% increase compared to 2018.

Data made available to UNHCR indicates that 1,690 persons mainly from Syria (38%), Iraq (24%) and Morocco (15%) have applied for asylum in the region in November, about the same as the previous month. Syria remains the main country of origin of all asylum applications in western Balkans since 2018.

UNHCR is working with countries in the region to strengthen their asylum systems, so people seeking protection can apply for asylum. UNHCR and partners continue to carry out protection monitoring to identify and refer persons with specific needs, while providing counselling to those who wish to ask for asylum.

Push-backs continue to be widely reported across the region, including with use of violence.

Bosnia and Herzegovina continues to host the largest number of migrants and asylum-seekers among the countries in the Western Balkans. At the end of November, these were estimated at 8,485, more than half the asylum-seekers and migrants in the entire region.

From January to November 2019, some 5,000 unaccompanied minors had transited or arrived in Western Balkans; 558 had applied for asylum as of end of November (11%).

Search and rescue operations at sea: In November, after departing from Libya, 1,900 people were disembarked after interception or rescue, of which 693 were brought back to Libya. From January to November 2019, 16,427 persons were intercepted or rescued at sea upon departure from Libya, of which 54% disembarked in Libya. From January to November 2019, NGOs have rescued one third of those disembarked in Europe.

Dead and missing: As of end November, 1,243 people are believed to have died or gone missing in the Mediterranean, a 43% decrease compared to the same period in 2018. Of these, 750 people are believed to have died in the Central Mediterranean. In November, some 47 people were reported dead or missing in eight incidents along the Eastern, Western and Central Mediterranean routes, including 73 people in Alboran Sea off the coast of Morocco on 26 November. Some 136 deaths have been reported along land routes so far in 2019. More information in the UNHCR November dashboard on dead and missing at sea.

OTHER SITUATIONS IN EUROPE

Turkey   4 million

Refugees and asylum-seekers [3]

Syrian Arab Republic	**3,691,333**
Afghanistan	**172,000**
Iraq	**143,000**
Other nationalities	**57,000**

[3] Source: UNHCR as of 30 November 2019

Ukraine   1.5 million

Internally displaced[4] and conflict-affected persons[5]

Refugees: [6]	**2,627**
Asylum seekers: [7]	**2,171**
Stateless persons: [8]	**35,650**

[4] Residing more permanently in government-controlled areas (GCA).
[5] Estimated number of vulnerable, conflict-affected persons living along the 'contact line' in government-controlled areas (GCA) and non-government controlled areas (NGCA).
[4, 5] 2019 Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO), UNHCR
[6] Refugees, including persons with complementary protection, UNHCR, State Migration Service of Ukraine as of 30/11/2019
[7] UNHCR as of 30/11/2019
[8] UNHCR, State Migration Service of Ukraine as of 30/11/2019

[2] Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia. References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999)

2 Denmark: UNHCR and Amnesty International hosted a conference on community-based sponsorship programmes.

Ukraine: UNHCR and OCHA facilitated the delivery of 34 trucks with humanitarian aid to conflict-affected areas in Donetsk oblast.

5

Albania: After 6.4-magnitude earthquake, UNHCR provided humanitarian assistance to affected populations.

Greece: The High Commissioner visited Greece and urged authorities to address the severe overcrowding on the islands, stressing the need for European solidarity.

4

Italy: Italy received 54 vulnerable persons evacuated from Niger on 5 November. They are all survivors of ill-treatment in Libya.

1

3

Includes Serbia and Kosovo (S/RES/1244 (1999)). The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

1 Albania: On 26 November, a 6.4-magnitude earthquake affected more than half of the country's population. In response to the authorities' request, UNHCR donated core relief items like tents, blankets and winter kits.

Armenia: The Youth Coalition in Armenia, an innovative platform for youth empowerment and communication between local and refugee youth established in 2019, visited the National Assembly together with UNHCR and partners. Members of Parliament invited the group to propose solutions to their challenges and suggest follow-up actions with the parliamentarians.

© UNHCR Armenia

On 16 and 17 November, the Youth Coalition's campaign "Theory of Change in Practice" mobilised over 500 people on environmental protection in Shengavit, a refugee-hosting community in Yerevan.

The Youth Coalition has now 30 members who initiate civic activities and volunteering in promotion of the Sustainable Development Goals, peaceful co-existence and cultural diversity, in cooperation with municipalities, national institutions and NGOs.

Belgium: UNHCR participated in the European Pro Bono Initiative, organized by a network of legal aid organizations in eleven cities over the course of one week. On 8 November, at the event in Brussels, UNHCR presented its partnership with the law firm DLA Piper in Europe and research projects on statelessness, child protection and tax deductibility. The aim of the Pro Bono Week is to present good practices and connect civil society with pro bono service providers.

Bulgaria: On 20–21 November, UNHCR led a regional workshop for lawyers on identifying and litigating cases of protection incidents at the borders on the Eastern Balkan route, providing a platform to improve coordination and strengthen litigation capacity of attorneys and NGOs from Bulgaria, Romania, Moldova and Greece.

2 Denmark: On 21 November, UNHCR and Amnesty International hosted a conference on Community-based Sponsorship programmes. Experts, refugees, and civil society from Canada, UK, Germany and Denmark participated in the exchange, geared towards exploring the potential of a community-based sponsorship model in Denmark. These models have borne positive and concrete results, and embody the commitments in

the Global Compact on Refugees to provide safe and legal pathways for refugees.

France: The Solidarity Train, an initiative under the patronage of President Macron, departed on 28 November for a journey through Paris, Bordeaux and Clermont Ferrand, before arriving in Geneva on 16 December ahead of the first Global Refugee Forum. The train hosted exhibitions about refugee stories and provided a space for exchanges. UNHCR, DIAIR (inter-ministerial delegation for refugee reception and integration) and SNCF (French Railways) had previously announced the initiative at an event in Paris. Press Release

Germany: On 9 November, UNHCR commemorated the 30th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall with the #teardownyourwall social media campaign. The High Commissioner recalled that the walls that need to be torn down today are in peoples' heads, referring to divisive rhetoric and hate speech that often targets refugees and migrants.

Having observed social media and press in Germany increasingly refer to resettlement with inaccurate, at times controversial information, UNHCR organised two events to present established facts. On 15 November, UNHCR and Caritas organised a breakfast for parliamentarians at the Bundestag with, as keynote speakers, a resettled refugee and high-profile policy and law makers in the areas of migration, refugees and integration. UNHCR stressed the importance of offering more resettlement places. On 27 November, UNHCR and IOM organised a background discussion on resettlement for the press, providing an opportunity for journalists to engage with UNHCR as a source of credible information.

3 **Greece:** The Greek government's announced on 20 November the intention to transfer 20,000 people from the islands to the mainland by early 2020, as arrivals to the islands far outpaced departures to mainland and centres are dangerously overcrowded, with the winter season posing further challenges.

In November, organizations of the Racist Violence Recording Network have been witnessing higher numbers of xenophobic incidents related to the transfer of asylum-seekers from reception centres to other accommo-

dations. While incidents are often incited by individuals, their organized nature is of great concern. UNHCR and other Network members called on media, state and local representatives to refrain from xenophobic rhetoric, which has been linked to increasing xenophobic action, and to support full implementation of anti-racist legislation.

Iceland: On 8 November, the Government agreed to resettle 85 individuals in 2020 in cooperation with UNHCR, the highest number since Iceland began resettling refugees with UNHCR. It represents a step towards achieving the government's commitment of receiving 100 individuals in 2021.

4 **Italy** has received 54 vulnerable persons evacuated from Niger on 5 November. This group included Sudanese, Somalis, Ethiopian and Eritreans who experienced torture or severe ill-treatment in detention in Libya. There were 23 children, of which 13 were unaccompanied. UNHCR provided information upon arrival and will follow up on individuals with special needs. Since December 2017, 913 vulnerable persons of concern have been evacuated to Italy, most of whom directly from Libya. Press release.

Lithuania: The Project Human Aid is an initiative created by the grassroots project 'Artscape' and supported by UNHCR to strengthen the capacity of groups that promote refugee integration. In November 2019, Human Aid facilitated team-building for new volunteers, who assisted refugees with housing and documentation.

North Macedonia: In an effort to counter divisive rhetoric, the Macedonian Young Lawyers Association and UNHCR held a workshop on the role of ethical reporting in effectively ensuring the protection of rights of refugees and stateless, at which Members of the Association of Journalists and the Council of Media Ethics gave presentations to some 30 reporters, editors and other media stakeholders. These types of efforts are key to foster and support evidence-based reporting to counter misinformation.

5 **Ukraine:** UNHCR and OCHA facilitated the delivery of 34 trucks with humanitarian aid to conflict-affected areas in Donetsk oblast over the course of Novem-

ber. The delivery included non-food items, construction material for UNHCR's shelter repair programme, and school equipment by UNICEF.

On 25 November, in an expert discussion organised by UNHCR, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and OCHA, authorities acknowledged the need to elaborate a new comprehensive strategy to promote durable solutions for internally displaced persons (IDPs). UNHCR and NRC presented the Recommendations on durable housing solutions for IDPs, elaborated at the Cities of Solidarity Forum held in October in Kharkiv.

From January to November 2019, UNHCR repaired some 800 houses in eastern Ukraine. More than 50 homes of families with specific needs were rehabilitated in Donetsk city area in November. For some, this was

the first support since the start of the conflict.

Turkey: The "Municipal Forum" on Local Solutions to Migration and Displacement, held on 26-27 November in Gaziantep allowed mayors and local development actors from different countries to exchange good practices that bridge humanitarian and development responses. The event facilitated the strengthening of partnerships and networks. A key outcome of the Municipal Forum was the 2019 Gaziantep Declaration, reflecting good practices in the implementation of globally agreed principles underpinning local solutions to migration and displacement. The Gaziantep Declaration was signed by 37 stakeholders, including mayors and representatives of development actors, civil society and UN agencies.

UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi visited Greece on 26-28 November 2019

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The High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi visited Lesvos and Athens on 26-28 November 2019. During his visit he expressed concerns about the situation on the islands, where nearly 40,000 asylum-seekers and refugees are accommodated in centres with a capacity for 5,400 people.

The High Commissioner called on the Greece government to take urgent measures to decongest the islands, move thousands of asylum-seekers to better accommodation and ensure adequate reception conditions. He also called on European states to support Greece in addressing the situation. In particular, he appealed to Europe to help the 5,000 unaccompanied minors across Greece, 1,000 of whom are on Lesvos.

On Lesvos the High Commissioner met with UNHCR staff, partners, local authorities and refugees. In Athens, he held talks with Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis and government representatives to discuss practical actions in addressing the urgent challenges Greece is facing, as well as long-term solutions in supporting refugees to become self-reliant and integrate.

The High Commissioner stressed the key themes of integration and responsibility sharing with a group of mayors who have opened their cities to refugees in a

meeting hosted by Athens Mayor Kostas Bakoyannis.

On 28 November the High Commissioner addressed two Committees of the Hellenic Parliament, met with diplomatic missions and other UN agencies, representatives of the civil society and others involved in the humanitarian effort.

The High Commissioner praised the compassion of Greek communities, which have demonstrated exemplary solidarity and hospitality. He pledged continuous support by UNHCR to Greece in its refugee response and urged the government to use UNHCR as a resource and advisor. More information in this press release.

Kara Tape accommodation site in Lesvos.

REPORTS AND RESOURCES

Family First

UNHCR, Caritas Italiana and the Communitas Consortium presented the report "Family First: In Italy with your family". Family reunification is often the only way to guarantee respect for the right to family unity of people forced to flee persecution and war. Family separation can have devastating consequences on people's well-being and their ability to rebuild their lives. In the 2016 New York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants, States committed to expand the possibilities for refugee protection, including with family reunification as means to facilitate safe and regular migration.

Legislation in Italy provides for measures to accelerate family reunification. In practice, lack of information, long waiting times and numerous bureaucratic obstacles risk compromising this right. The report issues recommendations to overcome some of these challenges and render the procedure more efficient, so that family reunification can be a safe alternative to perilous journeys. Press release in Italian

The Family First project is aimed at facilitating the procedures for family reunification in Italy. In its initial phase, it focused on producing research.

Family Unity

On 27 November, UNHCR and the Norwegian Organization for Asylum-Seekers released the report "Realizing Refugee's Right to Family Unity" comparing Norwegian, Swedish and Danish policies and practices for family reunification for refugees, highlighting good practices that could be replicated. The three countries have in recent years tightened their rules and practices, in some cases making it more difficult for families to get protection. Press release with findings.

Unaccompanied children

On 8 November, UNHCR, UNICEF and IOM, presented the jointly commissioned report by Fondazione ISMU (Initiative and Studies on Multi-ethnicity), on unaccompanied children's transition to adulthood in Italy, which explores the factors that favour or hinder a successful transition by young refugees and migrants. The report includes recommendations to Italian authorities and the European Union. Press release.

Impact of statelessness on access to human rights

The impact of statelessness can hinder access to fundamental human rights and render entire communities invisible and marginalized. UNHCR's report "Impact of Statelessness on Access to Human Rights in Italy, Portugal and Spain" draws from testimonies of persons concerned to describe how statelessness creates challenges in their daily lives that prevent them from achieving their full potential and playing an active role in society. Their accounts highlight the urgency of addressing the injustice of statelessness and of guaranteeing stateless persons full access to their fundamental rights. Press release in Italian.

Teaching materials in Russia

As a result of workshops organised by the Russian National Peoples' Friendship University, three publications with teaching materials were released to support teachers and educators of students of non-Russian origin. UNHCR contributed with articles on current protection issues and access to education by refugee children and asylum-seekers.

REFUGEE STORIES

Basque community opens its doors to welcome families from Syria

By Zahra Mackaoui in Bilbao, Spain | 22 November 2019

After a Syrian family arrived from Jordan in April 2019 to settle into Portugalete, a town nearby Bilbao, a team of volunteers soon became involved in the family's day-to-day life. What started as volunteer work quickly became mutually cherished friendship. In the words of a volunteer: "When people ask me: 'what are you doing helping those people?', I tell them that the question is rather: 'what are they doing for me?' Getting to know them has been transformative and helps one think in a different way".

Nine-year-old Syrian refugee, Adnaan, gets a piggyback from 24-year-old student and volunteer Javier Hernandez, while on a day trip to Bilbao's Guggenheim Museum.

Resettlement to a third country is crucial for refugees who may not find safety in the first country of asylum. In practice, however, resettlement is rare and depends on the generosity of host countries. Community-sponsorship programmes have started in several European countries, and the one in the Basque region is the first in Spain. It stems from a collaboration between che NGO Cáritas and the Ellacuría Foundation, central and regional governments and UNHCR.

Five families will receive help by the volunteers to access health and education services, navigate the town and develop a sense of community. This is a pilot that will hopefully be replicated in other regions in Spain.

Full story available here.

Pizza Laganizza - a self-reliance project rises in downtown Belgrade

By UNHCR Serbia | November 2019

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In a buzzing neighbourhood in Belgrade, "Pizza Laganizza" opened its doors in November. This pizza joint is run entirely by refugees, asylum-seekers and displaced people with support by UNHCR and partners. The head chef Elham arrived in Serbia in 2018 with her family. She learnt Serbian and trained as refugee chef with the German International Cooperation. "I've now got a pizza chef certificate. I am happy because I no longer depend on others to cover the needs of my family. The customers are very warm and friendly," she says.

The idea for a pizza joint was conceived by the Balkan Centre for Migration and supported by the US Julia Taft Fund. "Laganizza" means 'take it easy' in Serbian. For anyone taking it "too easy" to stop by **Pizza Laganizza**, the good news is that a delivery services will start soon. Full story available here.

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