

2015 KEY FIGURES

(AS AT END-AUGUST)

103,623

Registered intentions to seek asylum

5,753

Unaccompanied minors

920

Capacity of Asylum Centres

245

Asylum seekers in procedure

15

Persons granted asylum

25%

Of registered asylum-seekers are minors

PRIORITIES

- Assist the Government and the civil society in responding to the most urgent humanitarian and protection needs of the refugees
- Strengthen the asylum systems in line with applicable international standards

SERBIA

INTER-AGENCY OPERATIONAL UPDATE

1 – 7 September 2015

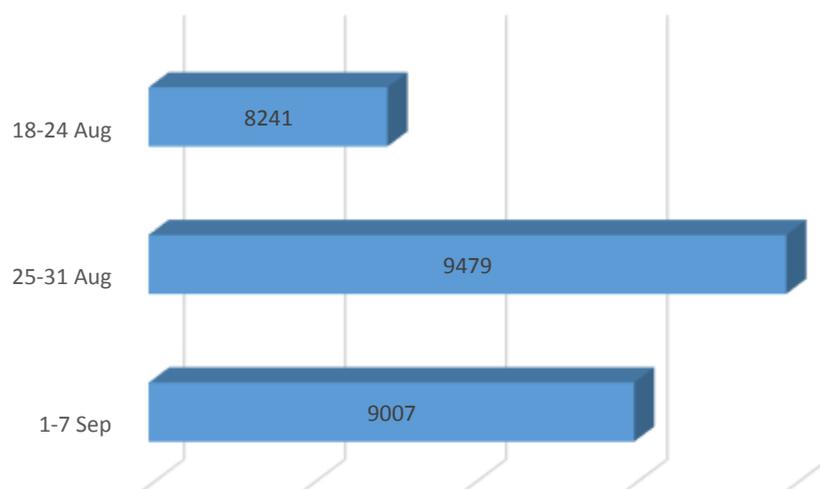
HIGHLIGHTS

- The number of refugee arrivals from fYRoM peaked to 4,000 per day in the last days of the reporting period. Current registration capacities remain at around 1,000 persons/day in Preševo and 500/day elsewhere. A total of 37,463 refugees were registered in August 2015, of which 94% were from refugee-producing countries, including 74% from Syria, 12% from Afghanistan and 6% from Iraq.
- As of 7 September 2015, 112,630 PoCs expressed intent to seek asylum in Serbia.
- Prime Minister Aleksandar Vučić announced a new location for a winter refugee aid point (RAP) near the old brick factory (OBF) on the outskirts of Subotica.



Intention to apply for asylum (Source: Ministry of Interior)

9,007 registered their intention to seek asylum during the reporting period.



UPDATE ON ACHIEVEMENTS

Operational Context

Serbia is situated along the preferred route through the Western Balkans for refugees originating from the Middle East and Asia, aiming to seek asylum in Europe. The majority are from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq.

The number of registered applications averaged 1,290 per day. As at 7 September, a total of 112,630 applications have been registered in 2015.

Slow but steady increase in the numbers of women and children continues.

A three-row barbed wire fence on the Hungarian side of the border is now complete and stretches along the 175 kilometers of the border. On 15 September, the new Hungarian law, which criminalizes “illegal border crossings”, comes into power. This fact seems to be accelerating the influx of refugees.

On 4 September, Interior Ministers of Austria, fYRoM, Hungary and Serbia, signed an MoU in Ohrid, fYRoM, on cooperation and joint patrolling in view of securing the Serbia-Hungary, Serbia-fYRoM and fYRoM-Greece borders.

The Serbian government is continuing to provide refugees with humanitarian assistance as well as registration documents.



*Child-friendly space in Preševo One Stop Centre
@UNHCR/Amr Marei*

Achievements



Protection

Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR works closely with the Government, central and local authorities, and NGO partners to monitor and support refugee protection and humanitarian needs at the main entry and exit points of the country, as well as along their

journey throughout the country. Locations covered include Preševo, Bujanovac, Vranje, Dimitrovgrad, Pirot, Negotin, Niš, Zaječar, Belgrade, Subotica and Kanjiža.

- Together with the Serbian Commissariat for Refugees and Migration (SCRM) and Border Police at the One-Stop Centre in Preševo, UNHCR is prioritising Extremely Vulnerable Individuals (EVIs) to fast-track registration procedures.
- On 3 September, UNICEF opened a child-friendly space tent at Preševo One Stop Centre, and hired three social workers to work in shifts therein.
- Info Centre team identifies UAMs both at the Centre and at Miksalište in Belgrade.
- A Syrian family with 2 disabled children were assisted by Info Centre staff and placed in a hostel until further notice (as unable to access Krnjača Asylum Center due to lack of registration capacity by the police in Savska St. in Belgrade).
- Belgrade Centre for Human Rights (BCHR) and the Ombudsperson visited Miratovac and Preševo on 3 September to assess the conditions and the approach of all the stakeholders from a human rights perspective.
- IOM and UNHCR are present constantly at the Miratovac RAP to assist refugees with transportation and other means of protection and sustenance.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- The flow of refugees continues to grow day after day, making the overall response in Miratovac RAP and Preševo Centre increasingly challenging for the existing structures and capacities, including human resources. Unless the current trend in terms of arrivals is reversed, the arrangements in place in both Miratovac and Preševo will need to be revisited and expanded.
- A number of unmet needs remain in Miratovac RAP and Preševo Centre, due to the large number of daily arrivals, resulting in long waiting periods for refugees to access registration and services. Additional staff and volunteers are needed in the RAP.
- There is a need to produce and post info posters on billboards/tents/fence at Miratovac RAP.
- UNHCR is advocating for the mother and child rooms in the Preševo Centre to be available during daytime as well (presently opened at 9 pm for overnight stay only). Among the 4,000 arrivals daily, there is an increase in the numbers of families with small children, pregnant women, the elderly and the sick.
- Refugees and migrants continue to cross into Serbia from Bulgaria, with the overall number of arrivals around 200 daily across the entire stretch of this border.
- Red Cross organisations in Negotin and Zaječar continued to distribute food and water provided for by ADRA, whereas refugees coming in through Dimitrovgrad and Pirot remained bereft of assistance.
- Refugees continue to report to Belgrade Centre for Human Rights (BCHR) that they are unable to access registration services at Savska Police Station in Belgrade and Krnjača Asylum Centre (AC).
- Simplified questionnaires, issued by the police instead of referral letters when they are unable to complete full registration due to high numbers of arrivals, continue causing confusion among refugees, especially when they are returned to Preševo by the police to complete registration.
- The number of buses and mini-buses transporting the EVIs from Miratovac to Preševo is insufficient.



*Refugees arrive to Preševo in south Serbia after a long journey
@UNHCR/Imre Szabo*

Education

Achievements and Impact

- In the Banja Koviljača, Krnjača and Bogovađa asylum centres, UNHCR funds Danish Refugee Council (DRC) activities for children, including a kindergarten supervised by qualified care-givers, and English and Serbian language lessons three times per week to improve their chances of integration within the community.
- The Bogovađa asylum centre conducts sewing classes for women and mothers who are protégés of this centre. This activity boosts refugees' psychological well-being and self-confidence, and empowers with transferable skills. Products include bedsheets used in other asylum centres and the One-Stop Centre in Preševo.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Notwithstanding the above mentioned efforts, refugees and persons granted subsidiary protection continue to face challenges of integration and education opportunities.



Health

Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR continuously supplies medical teams in Preševo, Miratovac, Kanjiža and asylum centre in Krnjača with medication and medical supplies.
- Medical teams from neighbouring health centres are in place at Miratovac RAP on a daily basis.
- Italian embassy donated an ambulance car to the municipality of Preševo. UNHCR coordinated with the Ministry of Health and the Italian Embassy in Belgrade to have the ambulance donated directly to the Preševo Health Centre.
- As of 1 September, Balkan Centre for Migration (BCM - funded by Catholic Relief Service) has a medical team in Vašarište RAP present four days a week, as well as an additional translator (3 in total). Between 50-100 refugees per day receive medical assistance from the BCM team.
- One medical mobile team from Belgrade municipal health centres is now in place in the Faculty of Economics park in Belgrade to provide medical assistance on a daily basis (one doctor and two nurses, 7am-5pm). Over 100 EVIs are assisted daily. Assigned health centres change every day.
- Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) have stepped up their presence in Belgrade, Kanjiža and Preševo.
- ADRA and Klikaktiv engaged 29 volunteers for the Info Centre in Belgrade, of which 21 specialize in psycho-social support.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- There is an urgent need to ensure daily presence of doctors and nurses at Vašarište.

- Disinfection and deratization of Miratovac RAP is urgently needed.



Food Security and Nutrition

Achievements and Impact

- Youth Office volunteers, Red Cross and UNHCR distribute high-energy biscuits and water provided by UNHCR to refugees arriving from fYRoM to Miratovac RAP.
- Red Cross distributes 500 pastry rations provided by SCRM twice daily at Miratovac RAP.
- Distribution of 600 UNHCR-funded food rations daily is ongoing at Preševo Centre. Red Cross distributes additional 400 rations daily, provided by other donors.
- ADRA continues to provide, through local Red Cross organisations and MSF, 2,000 food and hygiene packages daily.
- Eastern European Mission delivering food to refugees at the OBF daily.
- HCIT distributes food, baby food and sweets to refugees at the OBF and Vašarište RAP daily.
- Red Cross distributes food and baby food, donated by the IFRC, once daily at Vašarište RAP, only to refugees with either a referral letter or a completed questionnaire. The number of food/hygiene parcels distributed daily varies between 200-300.
- Citizens are bringing food and NFIs to Info Centre, who then coordinate with Miksalište and take some of the aid over there.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Miksalište in Belgrade is in need of baby formula/milk, food and hygiene items.
- Red Cross team at Vašarište are distributing food only to refugees who possess referral letters, and only once a day. Many refugees arriving after the Red Cross team has left Vašarište end up not receiving food assistance.
- Solution for food and water distribution at the Preševo Centre, with the current long waiting hours for refugees, is pressing.
- Sigma plus recommends supplying Miratovac RAP with milk and baby formula.



Water and Sanitation

Achievements and Impact

- HCIT distributes water to refugees at the OBF and Vašarište RAP daily.
- 15,120 of 1.5 litre-bottles of water were delivered to Preševo by UNHCR on 2 September; Youth Office volunteers distribute around 4,000 of these bottles to refugees at Miratovac RAP daily.
- Red Cross distributes water, donated from the Provincial stock reserves, once daily at Vašarište RAP, as well as water donated by the SCRM at Miratovac RAP.
- UNHCR and Red Cross provided the refugees in Vranje with drinking water.
- On 4 September, UNHCR WASH expert met with the director of the Preševo communal company. It was agreed to start works on unclogging and reconstruction of the sewerage system. The works started the next day and lasted two days. It was likewise agreed to review the existing contract with the communal company to include sewerage maintenance costs and other related costs.
- UNHCR contracted Boxi company to clean and maintain Miratovac RAP, where 5 mobile toilets were installed on 6 September.
- 11 chemical toilets were placed in Preševo Centre by UNHCR on 6 September and container toilets were connected to the sewage system. Three workers have been engaged for maintenance in the daily shift, and two will be employed for the night shift.
- Five chemical toilets were installed in Miratovac RAP by UNHCR on 7 September.
- There is a cistern with potable water present daily at Belgrade's Faculty of Economics park.
- The city of Belgrade placed additional 5 mobile toilets in the bus station area, bringing the total number to 15. Refugees also use the proper toilets at the bus station.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Cleaning and maintenance has become a burning issue at Miratovac RAP, requiring a systematic response.
- Night shift cleaners are needed in Preševo Centre.
- Stickers need to be put in place in Preševo Centre to mark drinking water.
- Water tank is urgently needed on top of the medical container in Miratovac RAP, to ensure running water supply. Doctors there are currently working under difficult, unsanitary conditions.
- More showers are needed at Vašarište RAP.
- Amity NGO appeals for one mobile shower and toilets at Negotin border crossing.
- There is an acute need to improve sanitary conditions at the OBF (only four mobile toilets remain on site).



Shelter and NFIs

Achievements and Impact

- HCIT distributes hygienic kits and diapers to refugees at the OBF and Vašarište RAP daily.
- Town authorities placed a military tent besides the police station in Dimitrovgrad for the refugees to shelter. As of 8 September this will be the place where local Red Cross will be distributing humanitarian aid.
- Red Cross distributes hygienic parcels, donated by the IFRC, once daily at Vašarište RAP.
- Four refrigerators procured by UNHCR (for medical containers in Preševo and Miratovac and for medical and SCRM containers in Kanjiža).
- UNHCR delivered one medical and one standard container to Kanjiža on 2 September.
- A winter RAP has been identified by the government in the vicinity of Subotica (58 Tuk Ugarnice), with potential holding capacity for 75 persons. It is less than 1km away from OBF and consists of three buildings at present: one which is new but unfinished, an old building that needs demolishing and then rebuilding and a third one which is to house the RAP management, medical team, interpreters, social workers, etc. Plans for this site were announced during the visit of the Serbian Prime Minister Vučić to the site on 3 September.
- Around 40 small refugee tents can be seen daily at the Hotel Bristol park and 15 across the road at the Faculty of Economics Park.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Capacities of the Preševo One Stop Centre continue to be overstretched due to the large number of arrivals, with long waiting queues of up to 2,000 persons presently on the outside. The number of refugees who remain at nighttime at the Centre to await registration is 300-600 presently.
- With the worsening weather conditions, there is a need for more tents/shelter in Miratovac, Preševo and Belgrade.
- Efforts by UNHCR are ongoing at Miratovac RAP to create shade for refugees with plastic sheets.
- SCRM is refurbishing another two-story building close to the existing One Stop Centre, with 5 rooms for refugee families on each floor and bathrooms.
- Disability ramp is needed most urgently in Preševo Centre, as well as a supply of crutches and walking sticks.
- As nights are becoming colder, SCRM is in need of clothes donations for Preševo Centre as well as storage space for clothes and distribution staff.
- Miksalište in Belgrade is in need of donations in footwear, clothes for boys, baby food/formula and diapers.

Working in partnership

- UNHCR continues to co-chair the **Refugee Protection Working Group** together with the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs / Chair of the Inter-Ministerial WG. A next meeting will take on 11 September.
- UNHCR implementing partners include: Amity, the Belgrade Centre for Human Rights (BCHR), the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), the Humanitarian Centre for Integration and Tolerance (HCIT), Indigo, INTERSOS, Microfins, Praxis, Sigma Plus and Vizija.
- UNHCR operational partners include the Ministries of Labour, Interior and Health, the SCRM as well as municipal authorities, the UN Country Team, ADRA, CRS, and MSF.

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