



FYR MACEDONIA

INTER-AGENCY OPERATIONAL UPDATE

16 - 22 September 2015

HIGHLIGHTS

- More than 35,000 refugees and migrants have crossed the border into fyR Macedonia during the reporting period 16-22 September with a daily average of more than 5,000. Assistance with food, NFIs, counselling, medical and psychosocial services, child friendly spaces and monitoring have been stepped up and registration is ongoing 24/7.

KEY FIGURES

13,158

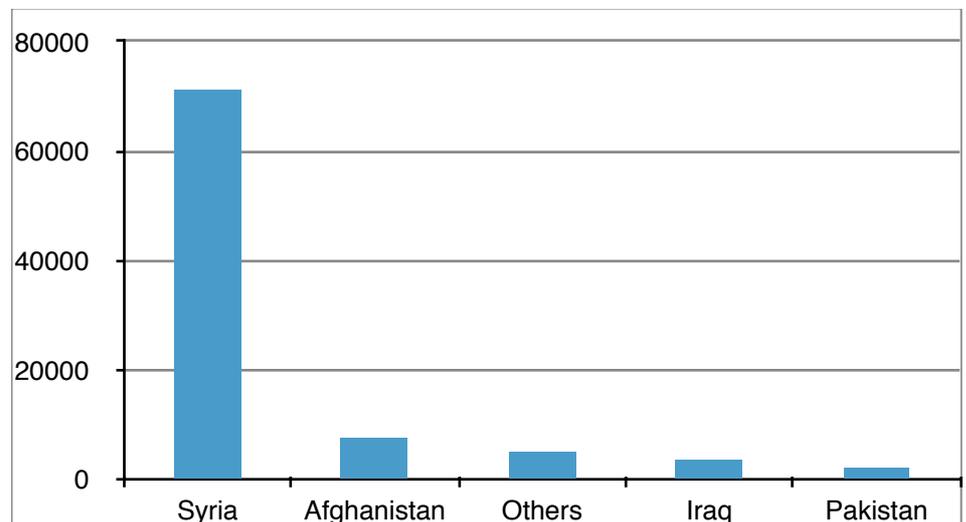
Medical interventions provided

2,844

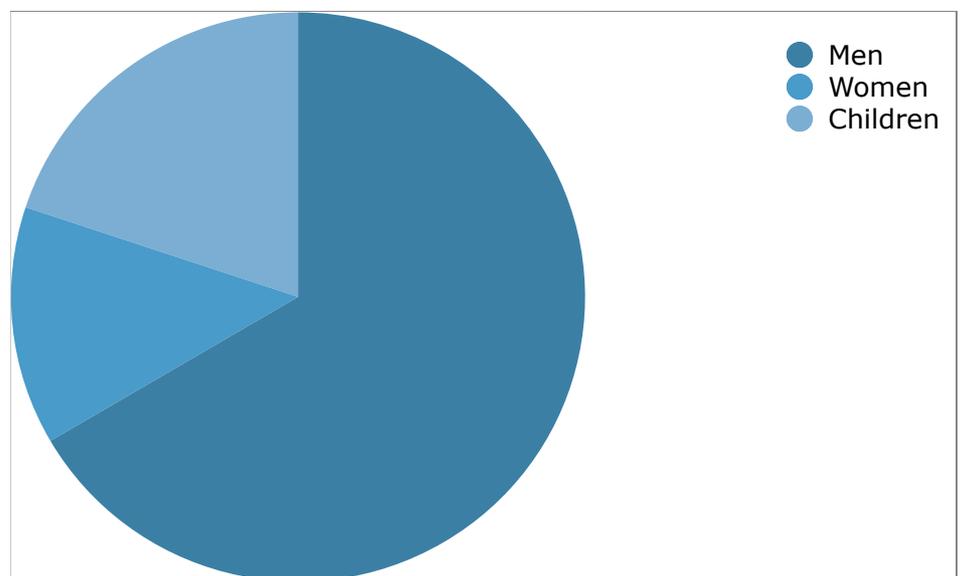
Unaccompanied minors identified

PRIORITIES

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



*Intention to apply for asylum: **90,774** applications have been filed from 19 June to 22 September 2015 (source: Ministry of Interior).*



UPDATE ON ACHIEVEMENTS

Operational Context

The Ministry of Interior's officially registered number of refugees and migrants crossing the border from Greece, continues to be high with 90,774 persons registered their intention to apply for asylum, including 18,000 children, of whom 2,844 are unaccompanied since 19 June until 22 September 2015. Of these 71,342 (78%) of the arrivals are Syrians, 7,624 (8%) Afghans, 4,904 (5%) Iraqis, 2,569 (3%) Pakistanis and the remainder represent other nationalities such as Somalis, Palestinians, Congolese and Cameroonian. 49 applications for asylum were registered out of which 36 were submitted by Syrians in the same period while from January to end of July 1,690 asylum applications were submitted.



Departure monitoring at Vinojug. Photo: UNHCR/A.Moller

Achievements

Protection

Achievements and Impact

- More than 35,000 refugees and migrants have crossed the border into fyR Macedonia during the reporting period 16-22 September with a daily average of more than 5,000. Assistance with food, NFIs, counselling, medical and psychosocial services, child friendly spaces and monitoring have been stepped up and registration is ongoing 24/7.
- The recent arrival pattern peaks during night especially in the early morning hours,
- The Government of fyR Macedonia extended the declaration of a crisis situation until 15 June 2015. The overall coordination officially apparently remains with the Crisis Management Centre while the Ministry of Interior has been made responsible for the field level coordination of the reception centre in Gevgelija.
- Improved features in the registration software, provided by UNHCR, trigger an alert if the name of the applicant and the birth day are duplicative to an entry already in the data base. This measure has already proved useful when a group of four alleged smugglers were sent back to Greece.
- At the Vinojug reception centre additional shading area of some 65 sqm were installed.
- During the reporting period approximately 976 women and children were provided with psychosocial assistance in the Child Friendly Spaces operated by NGO La Strada. 16 professionals (social workers, psychologists, pedagogues, translators and support staff) work in shifts to provide services to women and children every day of the week. These activities are funded by UNICEF and UNHCR.
- During the reporting period approximately 7,000 persons were offered free legal advice at the Vinojug station by MYLA who also assisted 7 asylum seekers at the Vizbegovo Reception Center with their asylum procedure. These activities are funded by UNHCR.
- In *Tabanovce* refugees continue to arrive from Gevgelija in an organized manner using trains, buses and taxis.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- There is still a need to increase the registration capacities. UNHCR and IOM agreed to hire more data entry clerks, to provide trainings and to purchase additional equipment.

Health

Achievements and Impact

- During the reporting period the Red Cross provided 13,158 medical interventions out of which 53 were pregnant women and 268 were children. Four mobile teams of the Red Cross are working in two shifts to provide medical assistance and first aid in Gevgelija and Tabanovce. This activity is funded by UNHCR.
- The medical teams of the Red Cross are increased by one more additional team per shift with a total increased coverage of 24 hours to meet the immediate needs of the increased numbers.
- During the reporting WHO supported training of 15 Red Cross volunteers, first aid responders and paramedics List of drugs and medical supplies needed for the health response developed and discussed with MoH. WHO will support purchase of priority drugs and medical supplies.
- Medical teams from the public health facilities are present at the Gevgelija reception center. Voluntary MRP and OPV vaccination is available at the site. All healthcare services for the migrants at the public health facilities are provided free of charge.
- Mobile gynecological clinic managed by HERA visits the Vinojug site on a regular basis (every Friday). This activity is supported by UNFPA.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Two additional ambulances are required.

Food Security and Nutrition

Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR took stock of the current distribution system and agreed with Red Cross how to further improve food and NFI distribution, supply chains and warehouse management. The standard operating procedures for food distribution were finalized after discussions with partners and shared widely.
- The NGOs Nun, Legis and Help the Refugees with the support of individuals are providing daily food packages and other products to the refugees.
- The Red Cross provided 915 food kits last week.
- NGO La Strada and Help the Refugees provide food packs for children.
- Red Cross has procured additional 3,000 food parcels (family packages) and sufficient water for the expected increase in refugees.
- WHO food safety guidelines shared with all the organizations involved in the food supply chain.



Refugees waiting to leave with the bus. Photo: UNHCR/A.Moller

Water and Sanitation

Achievements and Impact

- The Red Cross provided 245 hygienic parcels (for men, women and babies).
- Help the Refugees distributed daily hygienic goods to babies consisting of: creams (4) baby wipes (56 packages), and to women; pads (40pcs).
- The water bladder with a capacity of 10,000 liters is operational most of the time with twelve taps. Refugees are using it for drinking and washing.
- Disinfection of the rub halls and refugee housing units has now commenced to ensure improved hygiene in the reception centre.



Refugees arriving to Vinojug reception centre. Photo: UNHCR/ A.Moller

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- The toilet/shower blog is currently under construction and will be finished soon.

Communication and Information

Achievements and Impact

- A frequently asked question document was completed and will be used by field staff and translators to inform refugees; contributions were obtained from the UNHCR operation in Germany in particular with regard to family reunification and legal framework linked to this.
- Free Wifi connection has been installed at the exit point in Tabanovce.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Free wifi will be installed in Vinojug reception centre.

Working in partnership

Achievements and Impact

- The weekly coordination meeting in Gevgelija took place on Thursday 17 September.
- The coordination at the Vinojug reception centre is being improved with daily meetings between the border police and UNHCR. At the same time UNHCR has called for daily briefing with the humanitarian actors at Vinojug site to improve coordination.
- Partners working with the Ministries and municipalities to provide protection and assistance to refugees are: Help the Refugees in Macedonia, HERA, IOM, La Strada Open Gate, Legis, Kalliri MYLA, Nun, Droka, Red Cross, SoS Children's Village, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, and WHO.
- The EU Commissioner Hahn visited the reception centre in Vinojug. He was briefed by UNHCR Representative and the Minister of Interior who accompanied the Commissioner. The Commissioner was mainly interested in the registration procedures, safety standards, fraud mechanisms and if any verification of nationality is undertaken by the police.
- UNHCR briefed the international community during the weekly OSCE meeting on the situation in Gevgelija.