



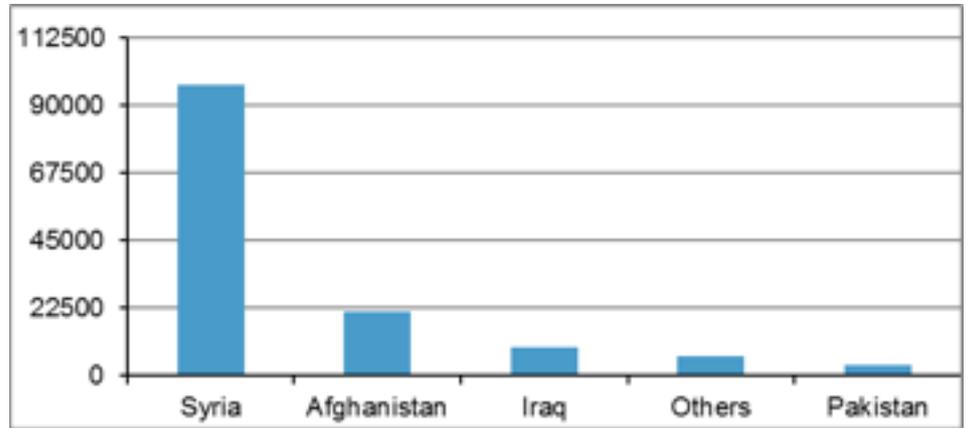
FYR MACEDONIA

INTER-AGENCY OPERATIONAL UPDATE

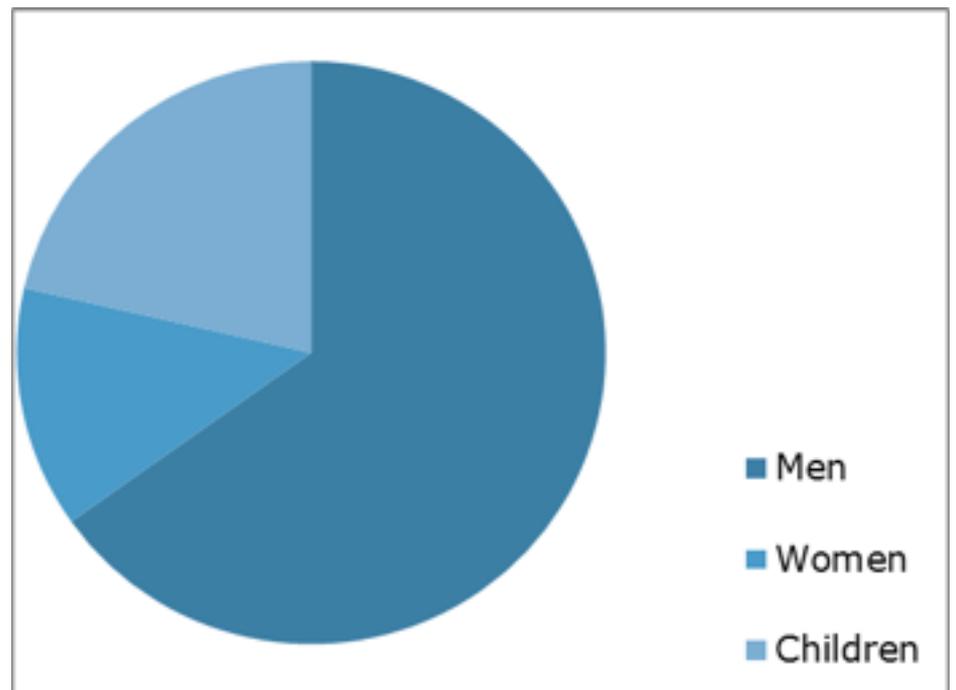
07 - 13 October 2015

HIGHLIGHTS

- 42,152 refugees and migrants have crossed the border into fyR Macedonia during the reporting period 07 - 13 October with a daily average of more than 6,000. On 7 October the number peaked with 7,816 refugees and migrants. Since UNHCR began monitoring the departures from Gevgelija on 1 July 2015 more than 325,000 refugees and migrants have departed.



Intention to apply for asylum: **137,290** applications have been filed from 19 June to 13 October 2015 (source: Ministry of Interior).



KEY FIGURES

16,740

Medical interventions provided

1,119

Medical assistance to children

5,168

Unaccompanied minors identified

17,557

Food packages distributed

4,635

Blankets distributed

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

UPDATE ON ACHIEVEMENTS

Operational Context

42,152 refugees and migrants have crossed the border into fyR Macedonia during the reporting period 07 - 13 October with a daily average of more than 6,000. On 7 October the number peaked with 7,816 refugees and migrants. Since UNHCR began monitoring the departures from Gevgelija on 1 July 2015 more than 325,000 refugees and migrants have departed.

The Ministry of Interior's statistics of refugees and migrants declaring their intention to apply for asylum reached 137,290, including 29,415 children, of whom 5,168 are unaccompanied since 19 June until 06 October 2015. Of these 89,467 (70%) of the arrivals are Syrians, 21,326 (16%) Afghans, 9,343 (7%) Iraqis, 3,397 (2%) Pakistanis and the remainder represent other nationalities such as Iranians, Somalis, Palestinians, Congolese and Bangladeshi. 50 applications for asylum were registered out of which 37 were submitted by Syrians in the same period while from January to end of September 1,710 asylum applications were submitted.

Achievements

Protection

Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR has provided two day protection trainings to the Police, Army and Special Forces. The purpose of the on-going workshops is to reinforce UNHCR - MOI Police/Army cooperation on refugee protection within mixed migration flows and build the capacity of border and entry officials to establish protection-sensitive entry systems in border areas. In total, 100 officers were trained; further trainings are foreseen to build on knowledge acquired during this initial phase of training. In the future, other actors will be invited to provide additional sessions.
- The construction of flooring and seating in one rub hall has improved the waiting facilities considerably for refugees and migrants.
- Although only trains are now used for transport, this procedure was temporarily put on hold with the usage of buses and trains during two days where an increased number of arrivals and technical difficulties of the trains required additional transport capacity.
- During the reporting period approximately 1,121 women and 1,764 children were provided with emotional and psychosocial assistance in the Child Friendly Spaces operated by NGO La Strada. La Strada identified and assisted 119 vulnerable individuals. The activities are funded by UNICEF, UNHCR and People in Need. Since 13 October La Strada is present 24/7 in Vinojug reception center, and Tabanovce train station with support of GIZ.
- The International Committee of the Red Cross started its activities on restoring family links in the Vinojug reception centre. Internet connection and a phone are available on site to allow refugees to get in touch with family members.
- During the reporting period approximately 10,700 persons were offered free legal advice at the Vinojug station by MYLA who also assisted 28 asylum seekers at the Vizbegovo Reception Center with their asylum procedure. MYLA also ensured prioritization for 117 vulnerable individuals for their registration. The MYLA activities are funded by UNHCR.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- The overcrowding of trains remain of serious concern to UNHCR. The train wagons are have a capacity of 80 persons but are often packed with around 150 persons, and as many as 210 persons in one wagon has been observed. At the same time the train price is still higher for refugees than locals and an official

statement or price scheme is not provided yet. Children remain to be charged on an arbitrary basis as a result of this and abuse by railway staff continues to be observed. UNHCR continues to advocate to address these shortcomings at the highest levels.

- UNHCR provided 20 additional computers and 15 printers to speed up the registration procedure; IOM provided some 12 additional data entry clerks to the 12 data clerks of MYLA which are funded by UNHCR. Standard operating procedures are being submitted by UNHCR to the Ministry of Interior but are still under discussions.

Health

Achievements and Impact

- During the reporting period the Red Cross provided 16,740 medical interventions out of which 27 were pregnant women and 1,119 were children. Nine mobile teams of the Red Cross are working in shifts to provide medical assistance and first aid in Gevgelija and Tabanovce. This activity is funded by UNHCR and Red Cross.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Cleaning in and around the Vinojug reception centre is still unsatisfactory although there have been improvements. UNHR and partners continuously work with the cleaners to improve the situation.

Food Security and Nutrition

Achievements and Impact

- Legis and Nun, Kaliri, Agape, Dorcas and ProCredit distributed 16,800 food packages and 6,200 sandwiches in Vinojug and 25,000 in Tabanovce during the reporting period.
- Red Cross distributed 757 food parcels (family packages).
- La Strada and Help the Refugees distributed 1,200 packages of baby food, 1,200 packages of biscuits for babies and 1,200 bottles of children's drinks.

Water and Sanitation

Achievements and Impact

- Help the Refugees in Macedonia, Legis, La Strada and other NGOs distributed daily hygiene items to babies consisting of: baby wipes (330 packages), diapers (6,000), and to women; pads (550 pcs) and baby shampoo, powder (250 pcs) and 60 liters milk.
- The Red Cross distributed 192 hygienic parcels (for men, women and babies), 89 diapers, 56 baby parcels and 17,700 bottles of water.
- The toilet and shower blog has been finalized and is ready to use as soon as the official handover has been completed.

Communication and Information

Achievements and Impact

- Internet connection and a phone are available on site to allow refugees to get in touch with family members.

- Feedback boxes and information boards are installed including an UNHCR information point which is equipped with a translator from MYLA. In particular the maps provided by UNHCR are frequently consulted.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- The installation of free wifi connection is awaiting permission from the relevant authorities.
- A loudspeaker system will be installed in the next days, financed by UNHCR to ensure large scale information provision in all of the reception centre.



A wheelchair is carried to the front of the waiting refugees. Priority is given to vulnerable individuals. Photo UNHCR/A.Moller

NFIs and shelter

Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR and Red Cross have distributed 4,635 blankets during the reporting period. Help the Refugees in Macedonia and Legis distributed 915 pcs of clothing, hats and scarfs for children, 415 pcs of women's clothing, 915 pcs of men's clothing and 300 pair of shoes.
- Samaritan's Purse and Dorcas distributed 866 backpacks. Kaliri and legis distributed 3,100 raincoats.
- Winterization of Vinjoug is underway with heaters are being procured. Electricity capacity is still not sufficient and negotiations are ongoing with the national electricity company and the Crisis Management Centre to ensure that sufficient capacity is available to sustain needs for the winter period.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Procurement of winter clothing by UNHCR, UNICEF and Red Cross is ongoing while local associations are currently providing second hand clothing to refugees. Especially rain coats and shoes are in high demand and often not available in relevant sizes.
- A refugee housing unit equipped as drying room, where refugees can dry clothing during rainy weather, will decrease the risk of illnesses among the refugees, where particularly children are at risk.

Working in partnership

Achievements and Impact

- The weekly coordination meeting in Gevgelija took place on Thursday 08 October.
- 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, Dorcas, Operation Mercy, Red Cross, SoS Children's Village, Caritas, Agape, People in need, International Relief-Samaritan's Purse, Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Macedonia, Hilal, JRS, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, and WHO.
- The UNHCR Assistant High Commissioner for Operations, accompanying the High Commissioner in Greece, went to the Greek/Macedonian border and also visited Vinojug. He was briefed by the police commander on the registration procedure by the MoI. He visited the reception centre including activities of all partners and was briefed by the UNHCR Snr. Emergency Coordinator.