



UNHCR
The UN
Refugee Agency

KEY FIGURES

20,110

Medical interventions provided

4,677

Medical assistance to children

17,719

Unaccompanied minors registered

40,041

Food packages & sandwiches
distributed

4,519

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

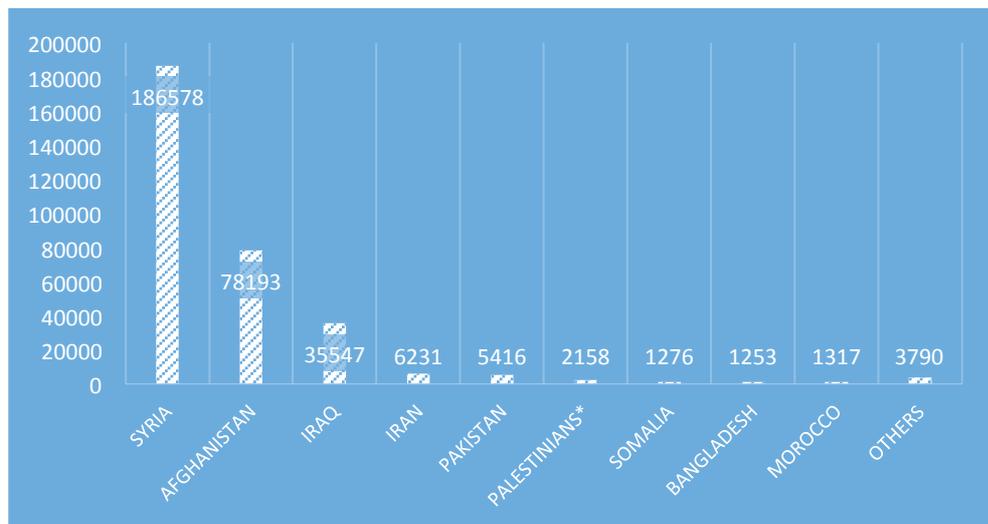
FYR MACEDONIA

INTER-AGENCY OPERATIONAL UPDATE

4-10 December 2015

HIGHLIGHTS

- 22,031 refugees and migrants have crossed the border into FYR Macedonia during the reporting period 4-10 December with a daily average of 2203. Since UNHCR began monitoring the departures from Gevgelija on 1 July 2015 some **627,404** refugees and migrants have departed.



- Intention to apply for asylum: **321,759** applications have been filed from 19 June through 9 December 2015 (source: Ministry of Interior)



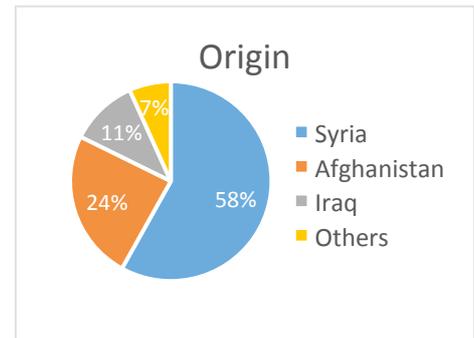
Refugees waiting for the train in Vinojug after long delays. ©UNHCR/B.Colzi, Vinojug (FYR Macedonia), 9 December 2015.

UPDATE ON ACHIEVEMENTS

Operational Context

22,031 refugees and migrants have crossed the border into FYR Macedonia during the reporting period 4-10 December with a daily average of 2203. Since UNHCR began monitoring the departures from Gevgelija on 1 July 2015 some 627,404 refugees and migrants have departed.

The Ministry of Interior's statistics of refugees and migrants declaring their intention to apply for asylum reached 321,759 including 88,740 (27%) children, of whom 17,719 (5%) are unaccompanied since 19 June until 9 December 2015. Of these 186,578 (58%) of the arrivals are Syrians, 78,193 (24%) Afghans, 35,647 (11%) Iraqis, and the remaining (7%) represent other nationalities such as Iranians, Palestinians, Pakistanis, Somalis, Congolese and Bangladeshi. In the period from 4 to 10 December, five applications for asylum were registered, while from January to end of November 1,780 asylum applications were submitted out of which 985 were submitted by Syrians.



Achievements



Protection

Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR intervened on a daily basis in cases of refugees who were being refused access to the territory. UNHCR teams provided relevant assistance according to the individual circumstances of the persons in need, and advocated admission into the territory when necessary. Most of the interventions were for families of mixed nationalities, as well as for persons originating from Syria, Iraq or Afghanistan, who for various reasons were not able to present documents proving their country of origin. The Border Police accepted UNHCR credibility assessments and admitted persons to the territory.
- UNHCR coordinated with the Border Police to ensure that UNHCR and MYLA's standard practice of advising persons facing imminent threat of deportation about their rights was maintained and regularly implemented. Counseling included: informing them about the right to seek asylum in the country and all of the related implications. UNHCR closely monitored the registration and admission process.
- UNHCR and partners systematically identified persons with specific needs in the transit centres and referred them to the protection mechanisms. A number of individuals with specific medical needs received medical assistance on the spot from the Red Cross or in the local hospital. Admission of extremely vulnerable individuals from the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to Serbia was facilitated through information sharing and referral between UNHCR partners in the two countries – the Macedonian Red Cross and the DRC.
- From 4-10 December approximately 5096 children and 4276 women were provided with emotional and psychosocial assistance in the UNICEF Child Friendly Spaces operated by the NGO La Strada and SOS Children's Village. La Strada identified and assisted 650 vulnerable individuals. The activities are funded by UNICEF, UNHCR, GIZ, People in Need and Terre des Hommes.
- During the reporting period 543 refugee group leaders, around 26,335 refugees were given information about their rights and obligations in FYR Macedonia at the Vinojug site by MYLA, who also assisted 19 asylum seekers at the Vizbegovo Reception Center with their asylum procedure. MYLA also ensured prioritization in 159 cases, around 454

vulnerable individuals for their registration in Vinjojug. MYLA's data entry clerks assisted the Border Police in issuing 26,992 intentions for asylum during the reporting period.

- A number of delegations visited and were briefed by UNHCR, the CMC, and partners in both transit sites throughout the reporting period. **In Vinojug:** an ECHO delegation; the German Embassy in FYR Macedonia; USAID; JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency); the UNHCR Regional Representative; the Amnesty International Balkans Researcher; WHO, accompanied by a representative of the Ministry of Health; USA for UNHCR accompanied by the Senior Emergency External Relations Officer (UNHCR Greece); and representatives of the UNDP Bureau for External Relations and Advocacy and the UNDP Regional Center, accompanied by UNDP Deputy Resident Representative in Skopje. **In Tabanovce:** The Minister of Interior of FYR Macedonia; JICA; CRS; WHO; SOS Children's Village; and UNFPA. The Dutch Ombudsman for children accompanied by the Deputy Ombudsman from Macedonia and representatives visited both sites. UNHCR briefed the delegation on the procedure for the identification and registration of unaccompanied minors.
- Between 7 and 11 December, in partnership with Terre des Hommes, UNICEF conducted four one-day child protection trainings for humanitarian staff working in Gevgelija and Tabanovce, who are in contact with children or delivering specialized child protection services. Approximately 70 people from 18 organizations including government attended.
- On 9 December, UNICEF, in partnership with Terre des Hommes, conducted a one-day workshop on child protection in emergencies, focusing on separated and unaccompanied children, for managers and technical staff from 10 organizations including the MoI, MSLP and CSW in Skopje.
- From 3 to 11 December, UNICEF surveyed 320 children and caregivers about the situation for children on the move, including their health, nutrition and clothing needs. The results will be shared with the government and partners to inform advocacy and humanitarian programming to better meet children's needs.



Afghan and Syrian children dressed warmly in front of the Child Friendly Space tent. ©B.Colzi, Gevgelija (FYR Macedonia), 6 December 2015.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Registration at the entry point in Gevgelija continues at very high rate (close to 100 per cent), but delivery of registration documents to refugees is a problem, as they complain to UNHCR about not receiving the documents from the Police. UNHCR observed that when large numbers of people are in the site, the police rely on group leaders to distribute registration documents. UNHCR raised the issue with the Border Police Commander, and it was mutually agreed that UNHCR would bring these cases to the attention of the authorities on a need basis.
- In addition to the individuals being deported from Vinojug transit centre to Greece, the Police screened documents at the border check-point, and refused entry to some of those who were not from the three nationalities (Syrian, Iraqi and Afghans), or those for which it was established that they had forged Greek registration documents. In the second case, the Border Police kept the forged documents. There is no record of the number of persons not admitted, but it exceeds the number of those deported from the transit centre. UNHCR is monitoring the practice.
- At least on one occasion a train arrived with open doors. The refugees stated that it was open throughout the whole trip. Aside from safety concerns, the refugees stated that it was extremely cold inside the train.



Health

Achievements and Impact

- During the reporting period the Red Cross provided 20,110 medical interventions out of which 194 were pregnant women and 4,677 were children. The Red Cross is working in shifts to provide medical assistance and first aid in Gevgelija and Tabanovce 24/7. This activity is funded by UNHCR and the Red Cross.

- The Ministry of Health of FYR Macedonia in collaboration with health centers and general hospitals in the regions provides medical care to refugees/migrants.
- In the period 7-10 December there was a Joint (WHO/MoH/UNHCR) Assessment Mission to assess the health-system capacity to address the public health aspects of migration.
- The first health coordination meeting with all stakeholders dealing in the area of migrant health was held on 9 December 2015 in the WHO office in Skopje, chaired by a representative from the Ministry of Health. It was agreed that regular coordination meetings would take place. The next coordination meeting will be held on 22 December 2015.



Mirela Shkrijelj, from the Red Cross, is assisting vulnerable refugees and migrants that just arrived in Tabanovce.



Food Security and Nutrition

Achievements and Impact

- Legis, Nun, Kalliri, Agape, Dorcas, La Strada, Help the Refugee in Macedonia, Caritas, UNHCR and Red Cross distributed 34,041 food packages and 6000 sandwiches in Vinojug and in Tabanovce during the reporting period. Partners also handed out 14,000 dates, 1152 croissants, 30 packages of dried fruit, and 473 kgs of fresh fruit in the sites. They also distributed 900 packages of baby food, 100 packages of biscuits for babies, 150 bottles of children's drinks, 740 juices, 2102 chocolate milks, 384 milks, and 100 boxes of formula, among other items.
- Legis, Caritas and the Red Cross distributed over 9754 warm soups and bread and around 4100 hot teas during day and evening at the Vinjoug site and in Tabanovce.
- With the emergency UNHCR introduced the Refugee Coordination Model, which includes three main coordination mechanism on protection, food and winterization/NFIs in the FYR Macedonia context. The coordination meetings take place every two weeks, and as of recently are co-chaired by UNHCR and the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy. The recent coordination meetings looked at the food distribution schedule in order to match the needs and the supplies by various interested NGOs, particularly in Tabanovce. While the winterization mechanism reviewed the progress with the installation of electricity at both locations- Vinojug and Tabanovce.



Water and Sanitation

Achievements and Impact

- Red Cross, Help the Refugees in Macedonia, La Strada and other NGOs distributed daily hygiene items such as baby wipes (53 packages), diapers (approx. 1200), baby powder (70), baby shampoo (50), baby cream (180), baby bottles (284) and to women, pads to women (750 packages) in Vinojug and Tabanovce.
- The Red Cross distributed 736 hygiene parcels (for men, women and babies), and approximately 16,595 bottles of water.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Garbage collection and hygiene levels within and outside of the transit site were not being maintained at a satisfactory level. MSF donated additional cleaning material and offers training for the cleaning staff.



Communication and Information

Achievements and Impact

- The UNHCR Communicating with Communities team helped operationalize the messaging system for refugees in Vinojug to explain: the services they will receive in the site; the registration procedure; and the onward transportation provided by the government from Gevgelija. Messages started airing in Arabic, Farsi and English on the loudspeakers located in various points in the transit centre. At the Coordination meeting held on 10 December, partners provided feedback and advised how the messages could improve or be complemented.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Wi-Fi coverage remained weak in both Tabanovce and Vinojug.



Shelter and NFIs

Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR, Red Cross, La Strada, Nun, Legis, and UNICEF distributed 4519 blankets, 1,047 sleeping bags, 1,200 backpacks, 110 pcs of baby clothing, 350 pcs of women's clothing, 600 pcs of men's clothing, 400 pairs of shoes, 800 winter hats, scarves and gloves. Help the Refugees in Macedonia also distributed 1m3 of clothing. Most NFIs were distributed in Vinojug and Tabanovce.
- Assembly of the timber frame of the UNICEF Child Friendly Space in Vinojug was completed during the reporting period. The flooring and walls will be added in the week starting 14 December.
- In order to re-use blankets in Vinojug, two containers are being washed to store the used blankets until they are washed and can be distributed.
- UNHCR procured 5300 winter jackets for men and women and stored them in the warehouse in Gevgelija for distribution in the site.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Poor weather and road conditions slowed down the transit of refugees from the northern border of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to Serbia, creating a greater need for overnight amenities in the transit centre in Tabanovce. The capacity in Tabanovce is still insufficient and not fully winterized, as the power supply remains unable to support the heaters and necessary equipment to keep the rub halls and the Refugee Housing Units (RHUs) warm. Inadequate reception facilities in Tabanovce are currently one of the greatest protection risks. A meeting involving the Crisis Management Center, UNHCR, DRC and the company contracted to upgrade the power supply took place. The company committed to preparing the specifications and related costs for the administrative area by end of the day. UNHCR is considering funding power supply network for the RHUs and the administrative area.
- Fencing of the Vinojug site is ongoing. The gate was relocated to the new entrance as the site was extended. During the night the fence behind the three new Rubb halls was totally damaged by people waiting to enter the site. The area was repaired during the day; however, the quality of the work was poor and partners are afraid it won't hold long.
- The cold is becoming a serious issue in Tabanovce, with many refugees staying the night. During the reporting period, the Red Cross distributed all of the blankets and food parcels they had. A number of individuals, including families with small children and persons with disabilities, were unable to find shelter. A number of them were

forced to stay outside and lit fires outside of the Rubb halls to try to keep warm. This posed a serious hazard in addition to polluting the air quite seriously. Until sufficient heaters are put in place, heating stoves (barrels) are urgently needed.

- The heaters UNHCR provided for the two big Rubb halls at the exit of the Vinojug site still cannot be used due to the electricity problems. UNHCR has put two gas heaters in each for the time being as a stopgap measure.
- Lack of electricity also affects the lighting in Tabanovce, which is also a security concern.
- Work on the flooring in the UNHCR Rubb halls is in progress; the insulations kits have been ordered and upon completion of the flooring will be installed in the Rub-halls.
- The progress of covering the needs for electricity in the both site is very slow, particularly in view of the heating. UNHCR is looking in to ways to support the government to speed up the process.

Working in partnership

Achievements and Impact

The weekly coordination meetings in Gevgelija as well as in Tabanovce took place on 10 December.

Partners working with the Ministries and municipalities to provide protection and assistance to refugees are: Agape, ASB, Caritas, Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Macedonia, Danish Caritas, DRC, Dorcas, Euro Human, GIZ, Grain of Goodness, Habitat for Humanity, Help the Refugees in Macedonia, HERA, IOM, JRS, Kalliri, La Strada Open Gate, Legis, MCMS (Macedonian Centre for International Cooperation), Mercy Corps, Merhamet, MYLA, Nun, Operation Mercy, People in need, Red Cross, Samaritan's Purse, SOS Children's Village, Télécoms Sans Frontières (TSF), Terre des hommes, Vlaznia Kumanovo, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF and WHO.