



LESVOS ISLAND - GREECE

FACTSHEET #2

13-30 November 2015

HIGHLIGHTS

59%

Of total arrivals by sea in Greece in 2015 passed through Lesbos

103,409

Total arrivals in November 2015

75,543

Non-food items (NFIs) distributed since October 2015

252

Refugee Housing Units (RHUs) set up

Population Trends

Total arrivals in Lesbos (1 January – 30 November 2015):

441,081 (out of **747,981** who have arrived to Greece through sea)

Average daily arrivals during November in Lesbos:

approx. **3,450** per day

Top nationalities of arrivals in Lesbos in November

2015: Syrian Arab Republic 40%, Afghanistan 34%, Iraq 12%, Iran 6% amongst others.

68% of arrivals in Greece in November 2015

were concentrated in Lesbos

Staffing and Presence

Staff:

29 staff currently deployed

7 staff from Senior Emergency support team on mission from UNHCR HQs

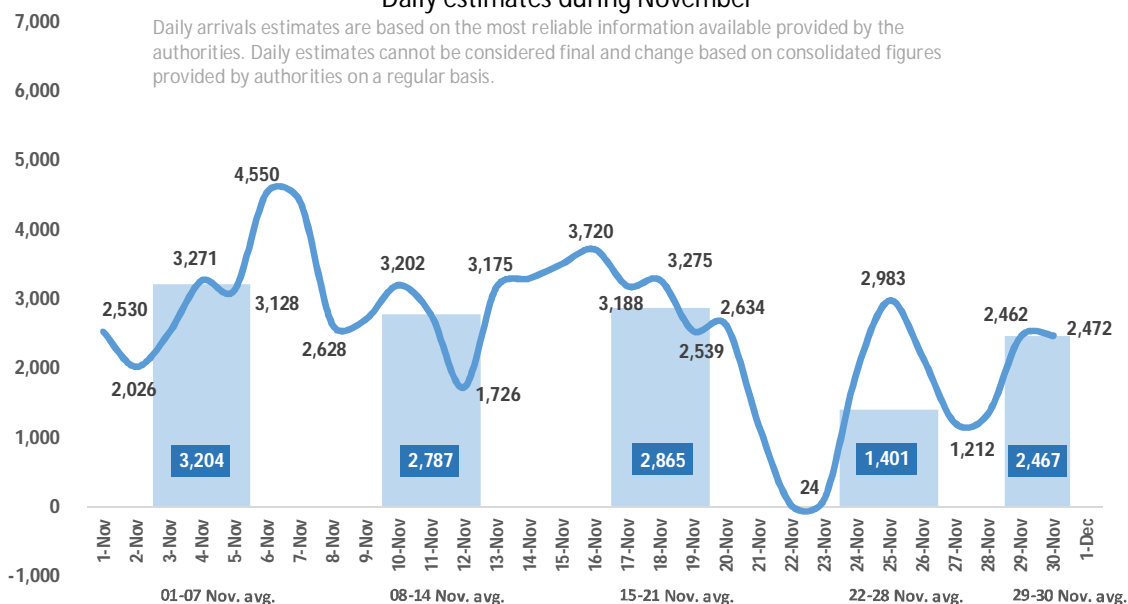
16 staff – recruitment ongoing

Presence:

Mytilini, Moria, Kara Tepe, Skala Sykamineas, Molyvos/Oxy, Mamtamados

Daily estimates during November

Daily arrivals estimates are based on the most reliable information available provided by the authorities. Daily estimates cannot be considered final and change based on consolidated figures provided by authorities on a regular basis.



OPERATIONAL CONTEXT

Over 49 per cent of the 894,883 refugees and migrants who arrived in Europe from 1 January to 30 November 2015 have landed in the Greek island of Lesbos, totaling more than 440,000 arrivals so far this year. Refugees and migrants continue to arrive in Lesbos at an average rate of 3,450 per day. With the winter approaching, incidents at sea have become more frequent. Official figures from the Hellenic Coast Guard indicate 199 dead people and 110 missing as of 30 November 2015, and distressed boats are rescued daily.

Arrivals peaked in October with 4,400 per day. In November, amid colder weather and poor sea conditions, arrivals decreased to 3,550 per day, with only a few boats arriving on some days.

The influx continues to put pressure on the island's reception capacity of 3,800 individuals with over 5,000 needing shelter every day. On Lesbos, the Moria registration site (a designated hotspot since 8 October) has been hosting more than 2,000 refugees and migrants and over 700 have stayed at the Kara Tepe registration and temporary accommodation site. Another 3,800 have found shelter at the volunteer-operated site for cases with specific needs Pikpa, the three assembly point in North Lesbos (Oxy, Skala Sikamneas, Mantamados), and at Mytilene port. Reception capacity planned surpass 4,500.

UNHCR continues to expand its presence in Lesbos in support of the Greek authorities, working closely with humanitarian actors and volunteers on the ground, in response to this complex and dramatic humanitarian situation, including by improving conditions at Moria, Kara Tepe, Oxy (Molyvos), and Skala Sikamneas. Winterization efforts are progressing with urgency, as temperatures have begun to drop. UNHCR also continues to provide advice and support to the authorities during the registration process, including with interpretation services.

MAIN ACTIVITIES

Reception capacity on the island

Reception of refugees and migrants is under the responsibility of the state. The police and municipality are respectively responsible for the existing registration and temporary accommodation sites at Moria and Kara Tepe.

Achievements and impact



UNHCR staff during an information and orientation talk with a group of newly arrived refugees from Afghanistan at the Mythimna / Molyvos assembly point © UNHCR/A. Zavallis, 13 November 2015

- UNHCR is establishing six strategic locations on the Northern shore, where majority of arrivals are recorded, to provide life-saving assistance, identify people with specific needs, provide information, and transport refugee and migrants to the assembly points. UNHCR and the authorities are setting up Refugee Housing Units (RHUs) in the six locations to ensure continuous presence and assistance. The first three RHUs were set up at the Faros/Lighthouse site in Molyvos on 15 November.

- In the Moria registration site UNHCR is supporting the authorities with construction works, including the replacement of fencing and gates; cementing roads and pathways; drainage and latrine re-construction.

- As part of the Better Shelter Programme run by UNHCR and IKEA, 520 kits have been sent to Lesbos. UNHCR has set up 252 family RHUs (173 in Kara Tepe, 62 in Moria, 11 in the assembly points and six in Pikpa), seven rub halls

(one in Moria, two in Kara Tepe and Oxy, and one in Skala Sykamineas and Mamtamados) and 50 tents (in Kara Tape and Mamtamados). Covered walkways and shades have also been established in Kara Tepe and at the assembly points.

Identified needs and remaining gaps

- Outside Moria reception centre, since the peak in arrivals in October, a make-shift camp site has taken shape on private land with a population of up to 300. Canteens and WASH facilities have been established by volunteer groups and private individuals. UNHCR is participating in discussions between volunteers and authorities to ensure that arrivals are accommodated in available RHUs, instead of being exposed to severe weather conditions and potential protection issues due to absence of authorities and lack of proper referral systems.
- UNHCR shelter experts conducted an assessment at Oxy assembly point and evaluated the location as unsuitable due to the proximity to a dangerous stretch of road for traffic and risk of landslides. An alternative site needs to be identified as a priority.
- Winterization efforts must be urgently finished with fitting of heating units in shelters and completing insulation and flooring of RHUs and rub halls.



Volunteers with the Green Helmets Relief Organization mixing concrete to be used for winterizing refugee housing units at the Moria Reception/Registration Centre © UNHCR/A. Zavallis, 14 November 2015

Transportation

Achievements and impact

- UNHCR continues to provide transportation from the shores to the assembly points and registration and temporary accommodation sites through four buses and four mini-vans on a 24/7 basis, complementing transport assistance provided by the authorities and other humanitarian actors, including four buses operated by MSF. Transportation will be expanded according to needs and available resources.

Identified needs and remaining gaps

- There is a need to increase the seat capacity and the number of vans in case of arrivals of larger groups, in order to avoid family separation. UNHCR is coordinating with volunteer groups to ensure needs are covered.

Humanitarian assistance

Achievements and impact

- UNHCR continues to provide Core Relief and Non-Food Items (CRIs and NFIs) to refugees and migrants through direct distribution and through volunteers and partners to complement distributions conducted by NGOs and volunteers. Between October and 30 November, 75,543 aid items have been distributed on the island.
- As part of its winter operation, UNHCR has adapted the assistance provided to include delivery of winter clothes (raincoats, jackets, shoes, socks, gloves and thermal ear covers), also in collaboration with the apparel brands ZARA and UNIQLO.

Distributions 1 October-30 November 2015	
Items	Quantity
Blankets	23,050
Raincoats (adults and children)	6,760
Sleeping mats and bags	3,124
Energy bars and biscuits	41,724
Plastic sheets and rolls	57
Baby kits	264
Hygiene kits	493
Wheel chairs and crutches	12
Solar lamps	15

Identified needs and remaining gaps

- There is a need to further coordinate distributions to avoid duplications and ensure all people in need receive assistance.

Facilitation of access to registration procedures

Achievements and impact

- UNHCR refers for priority registration people with specific needs, including unaccompanied and separated children (UASC), elderly, pregnant women, single-headed households, medical cases, families with young children, people with disabilities and survivors of shipwrecks.

Identified needs and remaining gaps

- The limited registration capacity remains a source of delays, congestions of the registration sites and tensions.

Protection

Achievements and impact

- UNHCR and nine other agencies conducted a Participatory Assessment (PA) in the South of Lesbos between 18 and 21 November, to identify gaps, priorities and inform protection response. In total, 128 refugees participated in Moria, Kara Tepe and Pikpa. Results from the PA showed that refugees felt welcome, safe and secure on the sites.
- The first UNHCR Help Desk started operating in Moria to provide information through group and individual sessions on: registration procedures; access to asylum in Greece; the EU relocation programme; available services at different sites; family reunification and other legal procedures. Volunteers are also being trained to assist with dissemination of information. Several tools in different languages were developed by UNHCR Communication with Communities team, including maps, leaflets, audio and video messaging.



Afghan boy plays with soap bubbles at Moria reception site © UNHCR/B. Cheshirkov, 30 November 2015



Refugees and migrants waiting to register with Greek authorities at the Moria Reception/Registration Centre before boarding a ferry that will transport them to Athens © UNHCR/A. Zavallis, 17 November 2015

- UNHCR continued efforts to prevent and resolve family separation, particularly during disembarkation and registration process and assisted families separated at the shore to reunite. UNHCR continued to work with ICRC for family tracing. UNHCR held an awareness session with the volunteers on the importance of family unity during transport.
- UNHCR continued to support people with specific needs through identification, referral and support by partners.
- Through a collaboration between UNHCR and Vodafone Foundation, free Wi-Fi and charging station were installed in strategic locations in Lesbos to provide connectivity and charging solutions for refugees and migrants.

Identified needs and remaining gaps

- The main concerns expressed during the PA were basic needs (food, shelter, and WASH) not being met and information needs not being sufficiently met. UNHCR will conduct regular PAs and will set-up a more effective feedback and complaints mechanism to ensure prompt and appropriate follow up.
- The need continues for comprehensive information in different languages to refugees and migrants at all sites.

Support to the European Union's relocation scheme

Achievements and impact

- UNHCR continues to support the relocation scheme implemented by EU Member States and EASO by providing information on options, processes and opportunities of relocation, as well as counseling on the asylum and relocation procedure in cooperation with the Greek Asylum Service, EASO and other partners. UNHCR also flags cases with specific needs and UASCs wishing to apply for asylum to the competent Greek Authorities (Asylum Service) so that they are prioritized for asylum registration. Most cases that UNHCR referred so far had disabilities, including injuries resulting from conflict. Five families were referred for relocation and four families registered for the programme.
- On 24 November, there was a high-level visit in Kara Tepe and Moria by the Greek Ministers of Foreign Affairs and of Migration Policy, EU Ambassadors, and UNHCR. Ambassadors expressed interest about the relocation process and UNHCR identification of potential cases, as well as the policy and practice of assistance to cases with specific needs.

Identified needs and remaining gaps

- While the interest in the relocation scheme is progressively picking up, there is a need to provide more comprehensive information on the process, timelines, services provided and reintegration prospects, including further information on the countries of relocation. UNHCR, EASO, the Greek Asylum Service and EU Member States are working in this

direction.

Capacity building for local authorities/communities

Achievements and impact

- Following advocacy by UNHCR, the Hellenic Association of Lifeguarding Schools (HALS) is supporting the Hellenic Coast Guard in providing life-saving aid on the north shore.
- UNHCR involved members of the local community in the installation of RHUs in the six strategic sites being established by UNHCR and the authorities along the north shore of Lesbos.

Members of the local community set up Refugee Housing Units to be used by newly arrived refugees and migrants until they are transferred by a fleet of UNHCR cars to staging areas near the northern shore of the island © UNHCR/A. Zavallis, 13 November 2015



WORKING WITH PARTNERS

UNHCR continues to work in close collaboration with 22 humanitarian actors present on Lesbos, as well as the local authorities. In addition, UNHCR works hand-in-hand with a wide range of volunteer groups to provide refugees and migrants with immediate life-saving assistance, protection information and transportation. Together, all actors have jointly responded to challenging situations, such as unexpected high number of arrivals or the impact of the weather conditions.

The overwhelming generosity of various volunteer groups and individuals has been an integral part on the provision of assistance to refugees and migrants during the humanitarian emergency in Lesbos.

A series of training and briefing activities have been undertaken by UNHCR with volunteers to build the understanding of the different roles, humanitarian practices and security measures to support mutual cooperation. UNHCR also supports volunteer groups by providing them with CRI/NFIs for distribution as well as covering some of their accommodation and storage needs.

As part of its coordination role, UNHCR has set up an inclusive coordination mechanism jointly with the Greek authorities, in which representatives of humanitarian organizations and volunteer groups participate. The coordination forums are a space of dialogue for the different humanitarian actors, where concerns and suggested solutions are shared.

The Greek authorities have recently announced their intention to formally request all organizations and volunteers on Lesbos Island to inform the local authorities about their presence and activities on the island.

UNHCR PRESENCE

UNHCR's team on Lesbos is currently composed of 29 people and will soon reach a total of 41 staff members, including protection and field officers, child protection, community services, Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM), site planners, and engineers.

A Senior Emergency support team led by the Director of UNHCR Division of Emergency, Security and Supply (DESS), Ms. Terry Morel, went on mission in Lesbos to support the implementation of UNHCR's overall objectives outlined under the [Special Mediterranean Initiative \(June 2015 – December 2016\)](#) and the [Winterization Plan for the Refugee Crisis in Europe \(November 2015 – February 2016\)](#).

UNHCR's office is located in Mytilene, but teams are present daily in all the main strategic locations. UNHCR's presence and activities will be strengthened according to the needs and available resources.

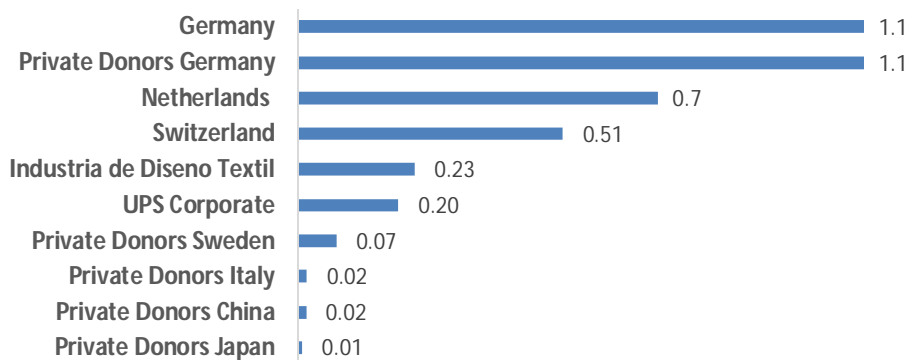
FINANCIAL INFORMATION

UNHCR's financial requirements for its response in Greece, as part of the [Special Mediterranean Initiative \(June 2015 – December 2016\)](#) amounts to **USD 27.2 million**. The Special Mediterranean Initiative outlines the Office's response to the refugee crisis in Europe, and also incorporates targeted programmes in countries of asylum or transit in Africa and the North Africa sub-region.

In addition, UNHCR is requesting an additional **USD 34.2 million** for activities in Greece as part of the [Winterization Plan for the Refugee Crisis in Europe \(November 2015 – February 2016\)](#).

UNHCR operation on Lesvos represents **40 per cent** of UNHCR total budget for the operation in Greece. As of 30 November, **USD 37.9 million** has been received for UNHCR's Special Mediterranean Initiative, including winterization activities, for all affected countries in Europe, Africa and North Africa. This includes **USD 3.9 million** for Greece.

Earmarked Funding for Greece in millionUSD



UNHCR is very grateful for the financial support provided by donors who have contributed to their activities with un-earmarked and broadly earmarked funds as well as for those who have contributed directly to the situation.

Major donors of unrestricted and regional funds in 2015: [The United States of America](#) | [Sweden](#) | [United Kingdom](#) | [Netherlands](#) | [Norway](#) | Private donors in Spain | [Denmark](#) | [Australia](#) | [Japan](#) | [Canada](#) | [Switzerland](#) | Private donors in Italy | [France](#) | Private donors in the Republic of Korea | [Finland](#) | Private donors in Japan

Contacts:

Carlotta Wolf, Associate External Relations Officer, UNHCR Greece, wolf@unhcr.org, Tel: +30 69 55 580911

Ioannis Papachristodoulou, IM & Data, UNHCR Greece, papachri@unhcr.org, Tel: +30 2 106 756 801

Boris Cheshirkov, Public Information Officer Lesvos, UNHCR Greece, cheshirk@unhcr.org, Tel: +30 69 51 801242

Links: [Arrival figures website](#) - [Refugee stories](#) - [Facebook](#) – [Twitter](#)



Greece
Key Locations on Lesbos
as at 26 Dec 2015

