

Aegean Islands

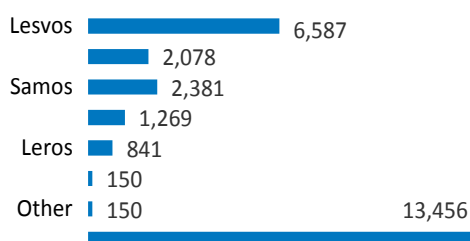
Sea arrivals reached a new peak in September with **4,900 people** mainly Samos, Lesbos, and Chios. The majority came **from Syria and Iraq**, and **62%** were **women and children**.

Asylum-seekers have to complete lengthy procedures **while in inadequate shelter** with **limited services**. In response, **UNHCR intensified transfers of those eligible to the mainland**, to

continue their applications there. **Robust action to improve conditions is needed** by the authorities, who are assuming the full management of services.

POPULATION OF CONCERN

Host Islands

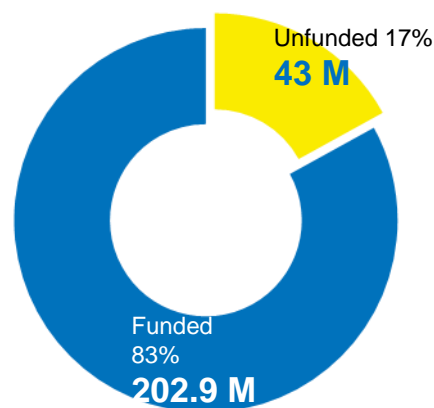


* Source: UNHCR Greece as of 30 September

FUNDING (AS OF 2 OCTOBER)

USD 245.9 M

requested for the Greece operation



UNHCR PRESENCE

Staff:

62 National Staff
 8 International Staff

Offices:

1 Islands Unit in Athens
 1 Sub Office on Lesbos
 5 Field Offices on Chios, Samos, Kos, Leros and Rhodes



Refugee children in Vathy RIC, Samos. Photo: UNHCR/Giorgos Kyvernitis

Working with Partners

UNHCR supports the Government of Greece who coordinates the refugee response. The Office works with other UN agencies, international and national NGOs, state institutions, community-based organisations, refugees, and host communities through sectoral working groups on [Lesvos](#), [Chios](#), [Samos](#), [Kos](#) and [Leros](#).

Main Activities

Protection

- UNHCR provides information on rights and obligations, asylum procedures and offers legal counselling and representation to asylum-seekers through partners. UNHCR identifies and refers people with specific needs to responsible authorities and service providers for targeted assistance.
- This month, a boat with some 25 people capsized off [Kastelorizo](#) island resulting in the death of a nine-year-old girl from Syria. The family is hosted in UNHCR accommodation where appropriate psychological support is offered.

Sexual and Gender Based Violence

- UNHCR provides capacity building to humanitarian organisations and authorities on sexual and gender based violence (SGBV) prevention and response, organizes awareness campaigns and conducts trainings to actors from various sectors on how to integrate SGBV guidelines in their everyday work.
- UNHCR and partners have also developed referral pathways so that survivors of SGBV receive appropriate help.

Child Protection

- UNHCR supports the identification of children at risk and assists in building the expertise of national and local actors. UNHCR coordinates with humanitarian actors and stakeholders to monitor and develop Standard Operating Procedures and minimum standards to enhance the protection of children.
- There are some 396 children at the Reception and Identification Centres on the islands, known as 'hotspots', who are awaiting referral to shelters according to UNHCR's estimates. Not enough shelters exist on the islands to accommodate all unaccompanied and separated children.

Education

- UNHCR is working with partners to explore options for non-formal education where formal education is not yet available and runs recreational spaces to ensure that the development and well-being of refugee children and youth is supported in a conducive learning environment.
- In collaboration with the University of Aegean on [Lesvos](#) and [Samos](#), UNHCR

facilitates classes in 12 European languages for adult and child asylum-seekers through the European Commission's online learning programme.

Health

- In anticipation of the full deployment of national service medical staff on the islands under the Ministry of Health, there are delays in the vulnerability assessment, an important component of the asylum procedure, and essential for the identification of people with special needs. There are currently no doctors from the Ministry of Health present in **Kos** and **Chios**, while the medical staff in the remaining 'hotspots' are not sufficient to respond to the needs. Many of the people have been staying on the islands for months and the deteriorating conditions have affected their physical and mental health.
- UNHCR offers primary health services to the residents of the Kara Tepe and Souda sites, managed by the municipalities of **Lesvos** and **Chios** respectively.

Food Security

- On **Lesvos** and **Chios**, UNHCR provides food to the population of Kara Tepe and Souda.

Shelter, Water, Sanitation and CRIs

- The increased arrivals of August and September have led to tensions and violent incidents in the overcrowded RICs, with hundreds of children, women and men having to sleep in small tents and makeshift shelter. In the Moria and Vathy RICs on **Lesvos** and **Samos** respectively, the hygienic conditions have deteriorated significantly with water cuts, insufficient cleanliness and malfunctioning drainage and sewage systems.
- On **Chios**, UNHCR supported the Municipality's efforts to further reduce the population in Souda with the transfer of eligible people to improved accommodation on the island and the mainland. UNHCR provided twelve large tents to the Vial hotspot to help ease overcrowding. Since 25 May, all new arrivals are accommodated in Vial.
- In September, UNHCR provided some 7,700 core relief items (CRIs) to the authorities to cover gaps on the islands.

Communication with Communities

- UNHCR, in coordination with site management authorities, convenes regular community discussions on the islands. These platforms are a channel of communication amongst asylum-seekers, humanitarian actors and authorities where issues such as hygiene and childcare are discussed. UNHCR also provides leaflets in different languages with information about the asylum procedures and access to key services.
- On **Lesvos**, for the first time, a women-only meeting was convened in Moria RIC with the participation of representatives from Palestine, Iran, Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Cameroon.

Support to local communities

- UNHCR organizes events and implements projects that bring closer the refugee and local population and help build bridges of trust and mutual understanding.
- On [Lesvos](#), UNHCR donated some 840 items such as wheelchairs and crutches for children and adults to the local community, including the hospital and a school.
- UNHCR donated mattresses, electronic appliances and furniture to the pediatric clinic of [Samos](#) hospital in an effort to support the public health structures on the island.

ESTIA Accommodation and Cash assistance

- In September, UNHCR provided dignified housing on the islands to some 917 people in apartments and buildings. Some 6,190 people benefited from partial cash assistance to cover certain basic needs, such as clothes, educational material, transport and communications. Cash assistance and accommodation help provide people with a sense of normalcy. They also contribute directly to the economy of the host community through the purchase of services and goods, and the renting of apartments.
- UNHCR works with the Government, local authorities and NGOs to provide urban accommodation and cash assistance to asylum-seekers and refugees through the ECHO-funded Emergency Support to Integration and Accommodation (ESTIA).

Logistics

- In September, UNHCR assisted the transfer of 1,323 asylum-seekers from the islands to rented accommodation and open sites on the mainland. Since June 2016, UNHCR has coordinated and covered the cost of over 13,000 such transfers, which help alleviate the overcrowded conditions in the sites of the islands.
- UNHCR offers local transportation from remote sites to key facilities and the Regional Asylum Offices on the islands in order to ensure that asylum-seekers have access to the asylum procedure and the necessary services.

Partners

- UNHCR on the islands works with international and national implementing partners in supporting the Government to manage the refugee situation: Danish Refugee Council, International Rescue Committee, Doctors of the World, Save the Children, Samaritan's Purse, Metadrasi, Arsis, Praksis and Iliaktida.

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Special thanks to the major donors of unrestricted and regional funds in 2017

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Thanks to the donors for the Greece Operation

European Union (200 M) | Spain (2 M) | Fondation BNP Paribas (0.4 M) | Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (0.3 M)

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