Ahead of the EU-Turkey summit on 7 March in Brussels, on 4 March UNHCR issued a [Press Release] with recommending six steps to solve the refugee situation in Europe.

Representatives of the Serbian Commissariat for Refugees and Migration, the Ministries of the Interior and of Labour, Employment, Veterans and Social Police, UNHCR, UNICEF and IOM met on 4 March in Belgrade to discuss the format of a joint assessment of the protection/solution needs of stranded refugees/migrants. It was agreed that the exercise will commence on 7 March in the Reception Centre of Presevo and should allow the stranded refugees/migrants to take informed decisions on their plight within the framework of applicable national and international law.

36,853 new arrivals were registered by the Serbian Ministry of Interior (MoI) in February 2016, as compared to 58,939 in January. 38.5% of them were men, 22% women and 39.5% children. Over 46% were from Syria, 28% from Afghanistan, 25% from Iraq and less than 1% from other countries of origin. 712 expressed their intention to seek asylum in Serbia in February while all others received “transit documents”. During February the Asylum Office of the MOI granted one applicant refugee status, four subsidiary protection, while nine asylum applications were rejected in first instance.

With new restrictions imposed almost every day arrivals and departures came almost to a halt: Only 569 (218 on 4/03; 115 on 5/03 and 236 on 6/03) refugees were admitted from fYR Macedonia, while 682 (429 on 4/03; 253 on 5/03 and 0 on 6/03) were admitted by Croatia.

569 refugees from Syria and Iraq were assisted at the Miratovac Refugee Aid Point (RAP) upon arrival from fYR Macedonia.

Police, Gendarmerie, IOM, Philanthropy, Remar, Medical Center, UNHCR, MSF, DRC, World Vision and Indigo were assisting them at the RAP. UNHCR/DRC/SPDE distributed 40 UNHCR blankets, 97 winter boots, 26 winter jackets and 178 water bottles, while UNICEF and Philanthropy/CRS distributed other non-food items (NFI). The health clinic treated 21 refugees inside the RAP. UNICEF/DRC child friendly space hosted 101 children and 53 women.

A song contest was organised in the Reception Centre in cooperation with the Youth for Refugees, Preševo (Serbia), ©UNHCR, 5 March 2016
UNHCR-funded buses transported 550 refugees from Miratovac village to the Registration Centre (RC) in Presevo where they were registered. Ten Persons with Special Needs (PSNs) were prioritize.

All UNHCR Refugees Housing Units and the Tobacco Factory dormitories were fully occupied by 606 stranded refugees. On Saturday an entertaining evening competition was organised for them by Youth for Refugees.

UNHCR, SCRM, Police, Medical Centre, ADRA, Red Cross, IOM, UNICEF/DRC, Caritas, DRC, BCM/CRS and Remar assisted refugees 24/7 at the RC. Natan, Humedica, Care international/Nexus, SOS Children, OXFAM 484, Global Medic and Indigo were present during the day. Save the Children, APC, Youth for Refugees, Atina, Border Free, Mercy Corps and MSF were active outside the RC.

UNHCR and partners distributed 135 UNHCR blankets, 41 winter boots, three jackets and 841 water bottles. Public Doctors, MSF, Humedica and Natan treated 259 refugees and the Health Center Vranje provided reproductive health services. The UNICEF/DRC/CSW child friendly space hosted 293 children and 112 women.

BELGRADE

UNHCR partners assisted some 200 (121 on 4/03; 149 on 5/06 and 126 on 6/03) refugees/migrants / day. Most were from Morocco, Algeria or Pakistan, with smaller numbers from Afghanistan, Syrian and Iraq. Around 70 were present in the city at night.

Many sought aid in food, clothes, use of internet and referrals to various services, including hospitals and registration. SCRM, UNHCR/DRC, Red Cross and Refugee Aid Miksalište assisted them. Caritas distributed food and clothes at the park near the railway. MSF offered primary health care and distributed NFIs. Asylum Info Centre remained open 24/7.

WEST

682 refugees from Syria and Iraq departed to Croatia on two train. 546 instances (including double counting) were denied boarding the two trains by Croatian authorities.

Approximately 400 refugees remained stranded in the Sid RAP, including those who had been denied boarding, and twelve who have registered with IOM for Assisted Voluntary Return (AVR) programme. Some of alleged maltreatment by Serbian or Croatian authorities.

UNHCR/HCIT assisted refugees at Sid train station and distributed 36 UNHCR blankets, 1,000 WFP HEB, 2,472 water bottles, 87 winter jackets, 51 boots and 85 UNHCR bags. IDC/Sid Health Centre and WAHA treated over 149 refugees.

In Adasevci RAP, UNHCR, SCRM, Police, APC, Red Cross Serbia, MSF, CRS/Divac Foundation, BCM, REMAR, OM and Czech Volunteers assisted them 24/7; World Vision, Intersos, Caritas, TDH, EHO, DRC and NSHC during the day. MSF provided medical assistance to 20 refugees and BCM/Sid Health Centre treated 21.

The UNICEF/ WV/CSW child friendly space hosted over 50 children and 15 mothers. The Red Cross and Caritas distributed food on buses. REMAR offered hot tea and soup. CRS/Divac Foundation distributed adult and children’s winter clothes and footwear.

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