

Aegean Islands

1- 30 June 2017

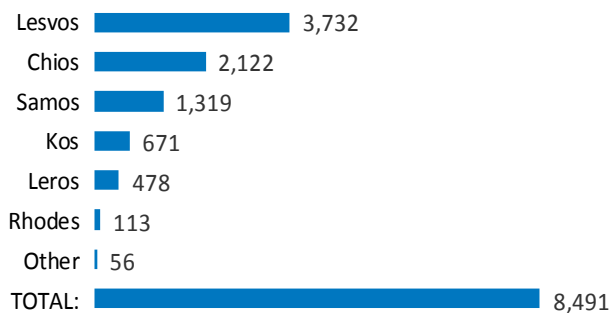
Some **2,000 people** arrived on the Aegean islands in June with the majority being **Syrian and Iraqi**. **55%** of the new arrivals on the islands are **women and children**.

Problems persist on the islands where some asylum-seekers must remain for their asylum decisions. This results in overcrowded 'hotspots' and poor conditions.

Efficient **coordination** and **delivery of certain services** that affect the lives of asylum seekers during the transition period can be further improved.

POPULATION OF CONCERN

Host Islands

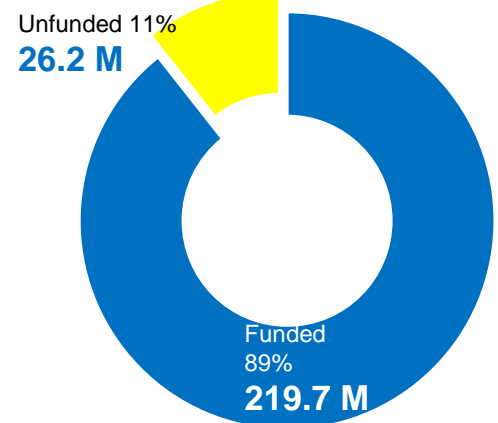


* Source: UNHCR Greece as of 30 June

FUNDING (AS OF 3 AUGUST)

USD 245.9 M

requested for the Greece situation



UNHCR PRESENCE

Staff:

73 National Staff
9 International Staff

Offices:

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



Syrian refugee families board a ship taking them from the island of Chios to a new facility on the Greek mainland. © UNHCR/Christos Tolis

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, community-based organisations, refugees, and host communities through sectoral working groups on [Lesvos](#), [Chios](#), [Samos](#), [Kos](#) and [Leros](#).

Main Activities

UNHCR supports the Government of Greece in the reception of new arrivals, asylum procedures and providing solutions to refugees.

Protection

- UNHCR provides information on rights and obligations, asylum procedure 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. UNHCR continues to organise individual and group sessions to asylum seekers.

Sexual and Gender Based Violence

- UNHCR provides capacity building to humanitarian organisations and authorities on sexual and gender based violence (SGBV) prevention and response, organises awareness campaigns, and conducts trainings to actors from various sectors on how to integrate SGBV guidelines in their everyday work. For instance, UNHCR provided some 63 solar street lights on [Chios](#) and [Samos](#) to reinforce lighting and, subsequently, the security in the sites.

Child Protection

- UNHCR supports the identification of children at risk and assists in building the expertise of national and local actors. On the islands UNHCR runs – through partners – recreational spaces ensuring that the development and well-being of refugee children and youth is supported in a conducive learning environment.

Education

- UNHCR is working with partners to explore options for non-formal education where formal education is not yet available. School attendance on the islands greatly varies. Indicatively, on [Samos](#), out of the 400 refugee children, only 7 receive formal education.

- UNHCR, in collaboration with the University of Aegean, offers language classes in 12 European languages to asylum seekers on the islands through the Erasmus online learning programme of the European Commission.

Health

- In anticipation of the provision of primary healthcare by the Ministry of Health, certain challenges have been observed during a transitional period on the islands with the handover of activities to the national authorities. Delays in medical appointments and vulnerability assessments, lack of medication, human resources and interpretation have a negative impact to asylum seekers and the asylum procedure.

Food Security and Nutrition

- On **Lesvos**, UNHCR provides food assistance to the population of the Kara Tepe until the end of the year. In addition, UNHCR has placed two communal kitchens to offer greater independency to the residents of the site as they will be able to benefit from the limited cash assistance provided by UNHCR with the support of ECHO.

Shelter, Water, Sanitation and CRIs

- UNHCR has supported the Greek Government in upgrading shelter in sites. In the Moria RIC on **Lesvos**, the placement of accommodation containers was concluded and approximately 650 people can now be hosted in improved shelter units. The Municipality of **Chios** and UNHCR removed tents and makeshift shelters from the beach, while UNHCR cleaned the area and supported the allocation of shelter to asylum seekers in the site.
- Despite efforts, accommodation for new arrivals on **Lesvos**, **Chios** and **Samos** continues to be a challenge with hundreds of people sleeping in crowded facilities, or on the outskirts of the official sites under poor living conditions exposing them to serious protection risks, including SGBV.
- UNHCR undertakes maintenance works of key toilet and shower facilities on **Chios**, **Samos**, **Kos** and **Leros**.
- In June, some 14,000 core relief items (CRIs) were provided on the Aegean islands by UNHCR through partners, including hygiene parcels, sleeping mats and mosquito nets.

Communication with Communities

- UNHCR, in coordination with site management authorities on the islands, convenes on a regular basis community-based discussions. These platforms serve as a dual channel of communication for better dissemination of information inside the site and as a feedback mechanism where issues of interest, such as hygiene, childcare and information provision are discussed. Furthermore, UNHCR on the islands provides leaflets in different languages with information about the asylum procedures and access to key services.

Peaceful coexistence

- In June, UNHCR donated three containers to the community of those affected from the 6.3 Richter scale earthquake on the island of **Lesvos**. The earthquake resulted in the death of one person, and the collapse of many buildings in the village of Vrisa. One of the containers will be used as a health clinic and the others by the Police authorities.
- UNHCR organises events and implements projects that bring closer the refugee and local population and help build bridges of trust and mutual understanding. On the occasion of International Blood Donors day, UNHCR on **Lesvos** joined forces with the local Blood Donors Association for a three day donation drive to the benefit of both the refugee and the local population. In 2015, during the refugee emergency, 166 units of blood were prepared for medical operations for refugees.
- On the occasion of World Refugee Day, a music and food festival with the participation of some 1,000 refugees and locals was organised by UNHCR and other humanitarian actors and volunteers on **Samos**.

ESTIA Accommodation and Cash assistance

- In June, UNHCR provided dignified housing to some 1,065 people on the islands, while some 210 places for minors have been secured in open accommodation facilities by UNHCR's partners.
- On the islands, some 6,520 people benefited from partial cash assistance to cover certain basic needs, such as clothes, educational material, transport and communications and restore a sense of normalcy in their lives. This intervention represents the first blanket cash distribution in the humanitarian sector globally.
- UNHCR in Greece provides accommodation and cash assistance to asylum-seekers and refugees through the ECHO funded Emergency Support to Integration and Accommodation (ESTIA).

Logistics

- In June, UNHCR assisted the transfer of 907 asylum-seekers from the islands to rented accommodation and open sites in the mainland. Since June 2016, UNHCR has coordinated and covered the cost of 9,264 such transfers, which help alleviate the overcrowded conditions in the sites of the islands. The inter-ministerial body (KEPOM) coordinates transfers and the allocation of asylum-seekers to state-run facilities.

Partners

- UNHCR on the islands works with international and national implementing partners in supporting the Government to manage the refugee situation: Danish Refugee Council/Greek Refugee Council, Doctors of the World, Save the Children, Samaritan's Purse, Metadrasi, Arsis, Praksis, Iliaktida, and Women and Health Alliance International (WAHA).

External / Donors Relations

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

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