

# Aegean Islands

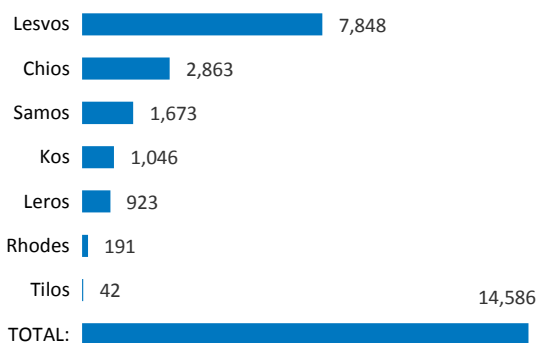
Sea arrivals continued mainly to Lesvos and Chios, but decreased this month to **3,200 people**. The majority came **from Syria and Iraq, and 62% were women and children**.

Amid dropping temperatures **tensions amplified and living conditions further deteriorated** for asylum-seekers in border reception centres with limited access to services.

The Government intensified transfers to the mainland and UNHCR supported some **2,130 asylum-seekers, mainly vulnerable or families** authorized to move.

## POPULATION OF CONCERN

### Host Islands

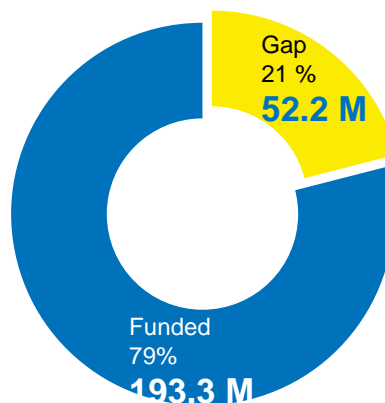


\* Source: UNHCR Greece as of 30 November

## FUNDING (AS OF 28 NOVEMBER)

# USD 245.9 M

requested for the Greece operation



## UNHCR PRESENCE

### Staff:

61 National Staff

8 International Staff

### Offices:

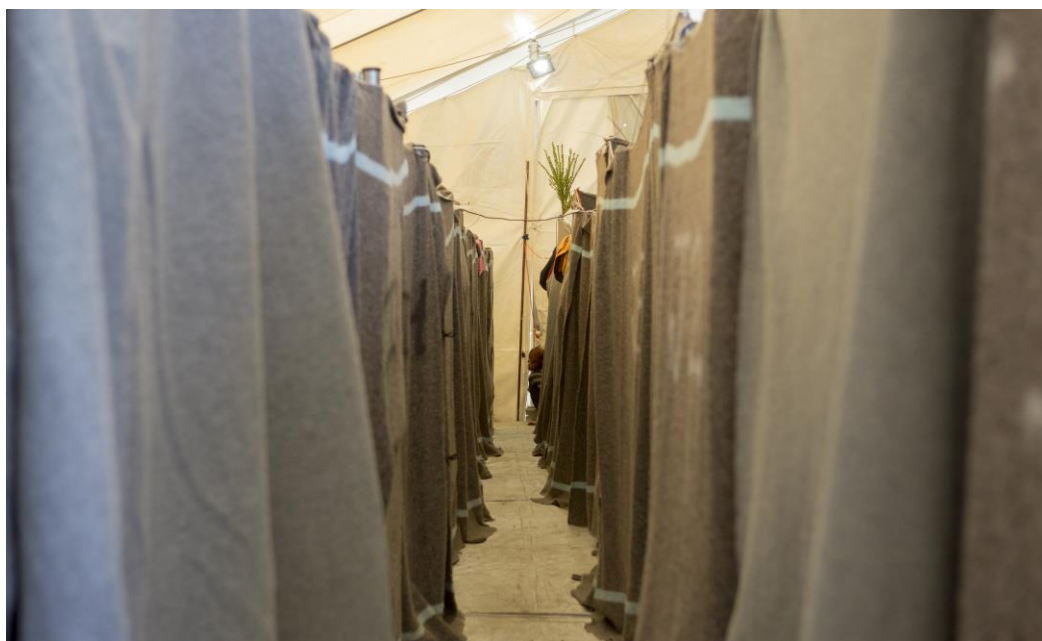
1 Islands Unit in Athens

1 Sub Office on Lesvos

5 Field Offices on Chios,

Samos, Kos, Leros and

Rhodes



Rubbhall used for accommodation of refugees in Moria RIC, Lesvos. - Photo: © UNHCR/Yorgos 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 directly and through partners. UNHCR identifies and refers people with specific needs to responsible authorities and service providers for targeted assistance.
- Two incidents at sea occurred in the Aegean this month – off [Kalymnos](#) and in the south shoreline of [Lesvos](#) – resulting in the deaths of a woman from Iraq and a ten-year old boy from Afghanistan respectively. UNHCR arranged accommodation and psychological support to the families and the shipwreck survivors.

### 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 guidelines preventing SGBV in their everyday work.
- UNHCR and partners have also developed referral pathways so that survivors of SGBV receive appropriate help.
- UNHCR works – through partner – on preventing and responding to SGBV in Kara Tepe site managed by the Municipality of [Lesvos](#).

### 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 510 unaccompanied children at the Reception and Identification Centres (RIC) on the islands awaiting referral to age appropriate shelters according to UNHCR's estimates.

### Education

- UNHCR is working with partners to explore options for non-formal education where formal education is not yet available as access to education, especially for children over 15 years old is limited. UNHCR 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

- Medical services in the hotspots on the islands remain limited as the deployment of national service medical staff under the Ministry of Health has not been completed yet.
- Medical staff recruited by the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (KEELPNO) on the islands were trained by UNHCR and UNFPA on issues – amongst other – of vulnerabilities, sexual and reproductive health and clinical management of rape.
- UNHCR offers primary health services to the residents of the Kara Tepe on [Lesvos](#) and Vial on [Chios](#).

### Food Security

- UNHCR provides food tailored to the specific needs of the population in Kara Tepe on [Lesvos](#).

### Shelter, Water, Sanitation and CRI

- With thousands of people staying in structures inappropriate for the winter, UNHCR is making available to the Ministry of Migration Policy over 425,700 shelter material and core relief items, such as sleeping bags and blankets, for use in the reception centres on the islands.
- On [Lesvos](#), the continuing new arrivals have further deteriorated the situation with some 5,800 remaining in Moria reception centre, despite capacity for fewer than 2,000.
- Although the number of arrivals to [Samos](#) decreased in November, poor conditions persist for approximately 800 people in the Vathy reception centre and the adjacent olive yard exposed to cold and rain without proper shelter and heating.
- Upon request of the authorities and with the closure of Souda site by the Municipality of [Chios](#) in November, UNHCR offered targeted shelter and hygiene solutions in the extended part of the Vial reception centre, including the set-up of some 40 large tents and three Rubb halls with the aim to replace them with prefabricated housing units.
- Reception facilities were at capacity on [Kos and Leros](#), while on [Rhodes](#) in particular people have no other option but to stay in a derelict building.

### 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 about the asylum procedures and access to key services.

### Support to local community

- UNHCR organizes events and implements projects that bring closer the refugee and local population and help build bridges of trust and mutual understanding.
- On [Samos](#), UNHCR donated medical equipment to the hospital as a gesture of appreciation for treating many refugees and migrants over the past years.
- Local communities and local authorities have been increasingly expressing their frustration over overcrowding and poor living conditions for asylum-seekers having to remain on the islands, especially on [Lesvos](#) where protests and a general strike were held on 18 November.

### ESTIA Accommodation and Cash assistance

- In November, UNHCR provided dignified housing on the islands to 979 people in apartments and buildings. Some 9,970 people benefited from 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 November, UNHCR assisted the transfer of some 2,128 asylum-seekers from the islands to rented accommodation and Government-run sites on the mainland and Crete. Since June 2016, UNHCR has coordinated and covered the cost of 17,764 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](#).

## External / Donors Relations

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

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Private Donors Japan (14 M) | Germany (12 M) | Private Donors Sweden (11 M) | Italy (10 M)

#### **Thanks to other donors of unrestricted and regional funds in 2017**

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#### **Thanks to the donors for the Greece Operation**

European Union (190.5 M) | Spain (1.9 M) | Republic of Korea (0.8 M) | Fondation BNP Paribas (0.4 M) | Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (0.3 M) | The Big Heart Foundation (0.1 M)

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