

# Greece Aegean Islands

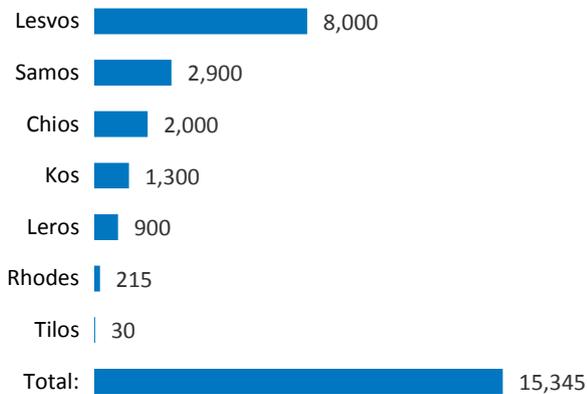
**Sea arrivals fell slightly in June** to 2,400 compared to 2,900 in May and 3,000 in April. Most were Afghan, Iraqi and Syrian families and mainly arrived on Lesbos.

With limited accommodation on the mainland, some **2,700 people** whose geographical restriction had been lifted by authorities **remained on the islands.**

**Conditions deteriorated amid serious overcrowding,** particularly in the Moria and Vathy reception centres on Lesbos and Samos.

## POPULATION OF CONCERN

### Host Islands

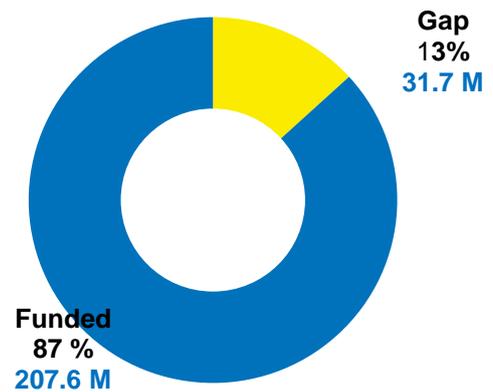


\* UNHCR Greece estimate as of 30 June 2018 of those who remained on the Aegean islands since the 2015-2016 mass flow.

## FUNDING (AS OF 5 JUNE 2018)

**USD 239.3 M**

requested for the Greece operation



## UNHCR PRESENCE

### Staff:

- 44 National Staff
- 4 International Staff

### Offices:

- 1 Islands Unit in Athens
- 1 Sub Office on Lesbos
- 3 Field Offices on Chios, Samos, Kos
- 2 Field Units on Leros and Rhodes



UN Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees Kelly T. Clements meets new arrivals at UNHCR's transit site in the North of Lesbos Island

## 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 and regional 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.
- UN Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees Kelly T. Clements [called for stepped up measures](#) to ease overcrowding and improve security in the islands reception centres after seeing the harsh conditions at the Moria reception centre on **Lesvos** on 25 June.

### Prevention and Response to Sexual and Gender-Based Violence

- UNHCR works to identify people at risk and SGBV survivors, provides legal information and refers them to appropriate services where they can receive specialized support.
- Sexual harassment and violence, including against men and boys, constitutes a major risk in the reception centres with the limited number of specialized services, interpreters and police officers exacerbating feelings of unsafety.

### 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 enhance the protection of children through legal aid, psychosocial support and case management.
- Conditions for unaccompanied children very concerning, especially on **Samos** where the designated area remains uninhabitable. In June, UNHCR supported authorities in transferring eight unaccompanied children from to temporary facilities on the mainland while they await placement in age-appropriate shelters. Since January 2018, some 370 children have been transferred to shelters on the mainland.

### Education

- UNHCR runs educational and recreational centres to ensure that the development and well-being of refugee children and youth, including unaccompanied minors, is supported in a conducive learning environment as access to formal education on the islands is not fully rolled-out and access to public schools remains a constraint.

### Health

- UNHCR's partner offers primary health services to the residents of Kara Tepe on **Lesvos**.
- Across the islands, especially on **Kos** and **Leros**, primary healthcare and identification of persons with specific needs are limited. The inadequate number of medical staff, namely doctors and cultural mediators, create further delays in the vulnerability assessment which is an integral part of the asylum procedure.

### Food Security

- In Kara Tepe on **Lesvos** UNHCR provides food for the specific needs of the population.

### Shelter, Water and Sanitation

- With a steady pace of [sea arrivals](#), conditions have further deteriorated in all reception and identification centres on the islands with worsening overcrowding as transfers to the mainland have also decreased. Pregnant women, infants, and others with specific needs have inadequate access to shelter or services.
- With the Moria reception centre on **Lesvos** at triple its capacity, conditions are abysmal for some 6,000 people, including children who represent 25 per cent of the population.
- The number of people in makeshift shelter and tents in Vial on **Chios** increased as new arrivals continued and reached almost 500 this month. Over half of the population in Vial are without geographical restriction and could be transferred to mainland sites.
- In the Vathy reception centre on **Samos**, where some 2,500 people are staying, frequent water cuts have contributed to a rapid deterioration of hygiene and sanitation.
- The reception centres in the **Dodecanese** are also above capacity leading to feelings of desperation and frustration amongst the refugee population.

### Communication with Communities

- UNHCR, in coordination with site management authorities, convenes regular community discussions on the islands. These platforms serve as a dual channel of communication amongst asylum-seekers, humanitarian actors and authorities.
- UNHCR provides leaflets and runs a [platform](#) in different languages for asylum-seekers and refugees about procedures and access to key services in Greece.
- UNHCR [marked World Refugee Day](#) with a number of events organized with the support of authorities, partners and local communities. Amongst them, Nan restaurant joined the Refugee Food Festival on **Lesvos**, a [football match](#) between asylum-seekers and locals took place on **Kos**, [artistic exhibitions](#) on **Leros**, an event on trafficking on **Rhodes**, a [musical performance](#) on **Samos** were also organized, as was a [discussion](#) with unaccompanied children and the Mayors of Chios and Athens on **Chios**' history of welcoming refugees.

### 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.
- UNHCR donated bottled water and dry food to the Hellenic Coast Guard on **Leros** for distribution to new arrivals on **Farmakonisi** islet.

### Accommodation and Cash assistance

- Cash assistance and accommodation support provide people with a sense of normalcy and contribute directly to the economy of the host community through the purchase of services and goods, and the renting of apartments.
- In June, some 1,350 people were accommodated by UNHCR in apartments on the islands.
- 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 June, UNHCR assisted the transfer of some 1,000 asylum-seekers from the islands to rented accommodation and Government-run sites on the mainland. Since January 2017, UNHCR has coordinated and covered the cost of over 24,500 such transfers which help alleviate the overcrowded conditions in the sites of the islands.
- UNHCR offers local transportation from remote sites to key facilities on the islands in order to ensure that asylum-seekers have access to the asylum procedure and the necessary services.

### Returns

- Under the EU - Turkey Statement, 20 people were returned in June from Greece to Turkey. Since 20 March 2016, 1,650 people have been returned to Turkey.

### Partners

- UNHCR on the islands works with international and national implementing partners in supporting the Government to manage the refugee situation: [International Rescue Committee](#), [Doctors of the World](#), [Solidarity Now](#), [METAdrasi](#), [Arsis](#), [PRAKSIS](#) and [Iliaktida](#).

## Donors

### Special thanks to the major donors of unrestricted and regional funds in 2018

Sweden 98.2 M | Norway 42.5 M | Netherlands 39.1 M | Private donors Spain 37.8 M | United Kingdom 31.7 M | Denmark 25.5 M | Private donors Republic of Korea 15.8 M | Switzerland 15.2 M | France 14 M | Italy 11.2 M

### Thanks to other donors of unrestricted and regional funds in 2018

Algeria | Argentina | Belgium | Bosnia and Herzegovina | Canada | China | Costa Rica | Estonia | Finland | Germany | Iceland | India | Indonesia | Kuwait | Lithuania | Luxembourg | Monaco | Montenegro | New Zealand | Philippines | Qatar | Republic of Korea | Russian Federation | Saudi Arabia | Serbia | Singapore | Slovakia | Sri Lanka | Thailand | Turkey | United Arab Emirates | Uruguay | Private Donors

**Thanks to the major donors of situational, thematic, regional or sub-regional funds in 2018**

United States of America 28.7 M | Private donors Australia 6.2 M | European Union | Italy | Norway | Sweden | Private donors

**Thanks to the donors of the Greece Operation in 2018**

European Union 195 M | Private donors Switzerland 0.5 M | Fondation BNP Paribas 0.3 M

**CONTACTS**

**Boris Cheshirkov**, Associate Communications Officer (Islands), Greece  
[cheshirk@unhcr.org](mailto:cheshirk@unhcr.org), Tel: +30 695 185 4661

**Elena Marda**, Liaison Associate (Islands), Greece  
[marda@unhcr.org](mailto:marda@unhcr.org), Tel: +30 695 18 01 242

**LINKS**

[Mediterranean Situation - UNHCR Greece - Twitter - Facebook](#)'- Face Forward... into my Home' Exhibition