

# SERBIA UPDATE

- **3,357** new refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants were counted in Serbia on 08 July (compared to 2,997 recorded two weeks ago). While 2,944 (i.e. 87%) of them were accommodated in 18 governmental centres, 400 were observed outside: some 150 in Belgrade City, another 150 camping close to borders with Croatia or Hungary and up to 100 waiting near the bus station of Loznica town close to the border with Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH).
  - UNHCR and partners assisted **1,015 newly arriving refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants**, - a steep increase from 491 the preceding two weeks, mainly due to a big number of men from Pakistan arriving irregularly from Greece through fYR Macedonia. 75% of new arrivals irregularly entered Serbia from fYR Macedonia and 9% from Bulgaria (down from 15%), while 10% came by air (down from 12 %), and 16% other/or unknown. 80% were adult men, 44% adult women and 10% children (8% boys and 2 % girls). Most new arrivals were from Pakistan (57%), followed by Afghanistan (17%), Iran (9%), Iraq (7%), India (3%), Libya (2%), and other countries (5%).
  - Hungarian authorities stopped admission of asylum-seekers from Serbia into their so-called “transit zones”, after a last three asylum-seekers were admitted on 28 June (compared to 24 during the preceding two weeks). News of this cessation of admissions spread fast amongst refugees/migrants, many of whom are still on so-called “waiting list”, leading to increased frustration and tensions.
  - UNHCR and partners received **431** collective expulsions reports (compared to 191 the preceding two weeks). 296 were reported from BiH (up from 5 during the preceding two weeks), followed by 113 from Croatia (down from 166), and 11 each from Hungary (one during the preceding two weeks) or Romania (down from 19). 60% of reports alleged violence, harassment or robbery (confiscating of moneys or telephones) by authorities of these neighboring countries.
  - UNHCR and the Serbian Commissariat for Refugees and Migration (SCRM) jointly updated and uploaded the June 2018 [Site Profiles](#). Reaching close to 35,000 views so far, they continue to provide a most useful and popular tool to assess and check reception standards in Serbia in real time.
  - In June, **739** foreigners registered **intentions to seek asylum in Serbia bringing the total in 2018 to 3,694**. 60% were registered by adult men, 12% by adult women and 28% for children. Most applications were filed by citizens of Pakistan (29%), followed by Iran (21%), Afghanistan (20%) and Iraq (19%). Six asylum applications received positive decision (subsidiary protection) in June, thus bringing the number of positive decisions by the Asylum office so far in 2018 to **16** in total.
- | Month    | Intentions | Applications | Substantive first-instance decisions |
|----------|------------|--------------|--------------------------------------|
| January  | 427        | 8            | 3                                    |
| February | 594        | 14           | 2                                    |
| March    | 710        | 13           | 1                                    |
| April    | 642        | 38           | 8                                    |
| May      | 582        | 3            | 3                                    |
| June     | 739        | 22           | 8                                    |

Legend: ■ Intentions (Total: 3694) ■ Applications (Total: 98) ■ Substantive first-instance decisions (Total: 25)
- In June, UNHCR and partners provided **over 9,000 community-based protection services**, including some 6,000 legal counselling/info services, close to 900 referrals to accommodation, over 950 referrals to medical, social welfare, legal registration and other forms of assistance, provided psychosocial and psychological support in over 250 instances, non-formal educational activities/recreational activities in over 400 instances and other protection interventions in over **25** sites throughout Serbia.
  - On 02 July, UNHCR partners Humanitarian Centre for Integration and Tolerance (HCIT) and Crisis Response and Policy Centre (CRPC), presented their joint publication “Between closed borders” describing developments, trends as well as observations on refugees/migrant situation from their collaborative field work in Belgrade, North and West of Serbia in 2017. The report will be available on the [HCIT](#) and [CRPC](#) websites.



Play “If Only I was not a Woman”, based on an Afghan refugee story, Belgrade National Theatre @IAN, 26 June 2018

- Two theatre plays inspired by refugees were staged by UNHCR partners in Belgrade: on 26 June, the International Aid Network (IAN) organized a play “*If Only I Was Not a Woman*”, produced on the basis of a story of an Afghan refugee woman depicting her risky journey to Western Europe with smugglers, performed by Serbian actors, in costumes sown by refugee women. On 05 July, the Belgrade Centre for Human Rights (BCHR) organized “*The Game*”, a play reflecting the relationship between locals and new refugees/migrants arriving in Serbia, followed by a panel discussion with UNHCR, IOM, Regional Youth Cooperation Office, BCHR as well as an Afghan refugee actor. For more information/future performances you may check the [IAN](#) and [HCIT](#) sites.
- With the support of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, and in co-operation with UNICEF and CRPC, UNHCR organized a workshop for over 120 principals, teachers, educators and psychologists of 30 primary and 10 secondary schools on the information about countries of origin of refugee students and a workshop for 20 educators in the three institutions where refugee UASC are accommodated (two in Belgrade and one in Nis).
- A Public Call for 133 flats for rent/buy-off in Belgrade, under the sub-project SRB9 of the **Regional Housing Programme**, was published on 28 June.
- On 02 and on 03 July, UNHCR promoted enhancing coordination of assistance to the **local integration** of refugees with the SCRM, the Ministry of Labour, Social and Veteran Affairs, the National Employment Service and BCHR. Two obstacles, namely tax exemption for work permits and the necessity of primary school certificates for access to vocational trainings, were highlighted.
- Amidst media attention to populist messages against asylum-seekers in some parts of Europe, UNHCR released [recommendations](#) to the Austrian Presidency of the Council of the European Union (EU), urging the Presidency to lead and unite EU Member States to deliver coherent and common European asylum policies that ensure access to territory and uphold the right to asylum. See also related [UNHCR Press Release](#).

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