

Greece

There were **3,200 sea** and **980 land arrivals** this month. The shortage of accommodation for asylum-seekers across Greece means that three and four time more people live in the centres of

Lesvos and Samos over their respective capacity. The conditions are particularly difficult for pregnant women, unaccompanied children and the other vulnerable asylum-seekers. Overcrowding has also worsened in

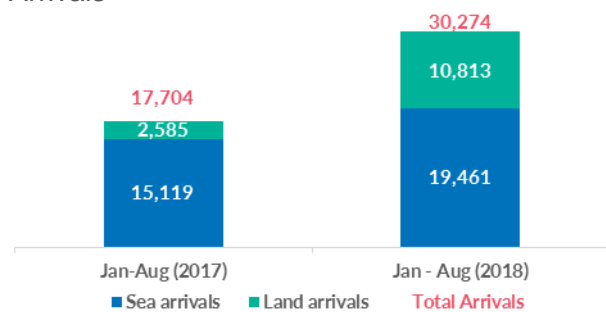
some mainland sites. Tension there has increased, particularly in camps with limited services. [UNHCR urged the authorities](#) to boost efforts and consider extraordinary measures.

REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS IN GREECE*

62,500

17,000 on the islands and **45,500** in the mainland

Arrivals



*UNHCR estimate as of 31 August 2018 of those who arrived and remained in Greece since the 2015 – 2016 flow.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

52,600

eligible asylum-seekers and refugees this month, and 83,800 since April 2017 received **cash assistance**.

1,600

people this month, and 30,800 since June 2016 from the islands **transferred** to the mainland with UNHCR support.

21,500

people this month, and 51,500 since November 2015 have benefitted from UNHCR's **accommodation in apartments**.

UNHCR PRESENCE

Staff:

288 National Staff

38 International Staff

Offices:

1 Country Office in Athens

2 Sub Offices in
Thessaloniki, Lesvos

4 Field Offices in Attika,
Chios, Samos, Kos

4 Field Units in Evros,
Ioannina, Leros,
Rhodes



Aid workers and volunteers in Thessaloniki honour World Humanitarian Day on 19 August, paying tribute to aid workers who risk their lives in humanitarian service. Join the #NotATarget movement and demand world leaders to do everything in their power to protect all civilians in conflict.

Working with Partners

- UNHCR supports the Government of Greece who leads the refugee response, working closely with other UN agencies, international and national NGOs, regional and State institutions, community-based organizations, refugee and host communities.

Main Activities

Accommodation and Cash Assistance

- UNHCR runs the EU-funded **ESTIA accommodation** and **cash assistance** programmes in cooperation with the Government, municipalities and NGOs.
- Ultimately, these will be managed exclusively by the authorities and UNHCR works closely with staff from State agencies in preparation for this transition.
- Apartments in cities and towns offer asylum-seekers and refugees greater dignity and independence. Children can go to school, while access to healthcare and other services is easier. It also helps the inclusion of those who will remain in Greece. The host population benefits as well from the 4,235 apartments and 25 buildings that the programme rents in 21 cities across Greece. UNHCR had 25,492 accommodation places in August.
- UNHCR gave cash in the form of pre-paid cards to 52,637 asylum-seekers and refugees in August. Cash preserves refugees' dignity and allows them to choose what they need most. Cash is spent on goods and services, and so it also contributes to the local community. In August, nearly 5.2 million euro in cash assistance will eventually be re-injected into the local economy.

Protection

- The RICs on the islands are overpopulated and as a result, refugees, including many pregnant women and elderly are often found without proper shelter or basic assistance items, such as hygiene kits. Frustration and anxiety among refugees is mounting amid dire conditions, also as a result of their lengthy stay in the centres.
- UNHCR supports the Ministry of Migration Policy transfer asylum-seekers from the islands to continue their asylum procedure in the mainland. This helps ease overcrowding on islands' Reception and Identification Centres (RICs). The shortage of accommodation however has limited the transfers to 1,547 people this month, from Lesbos (838), Samos (262), Chios (243), Leros (109) Kos (90) and Rhodes (5), while over many people remained on the islands waiting for shelter to become available in the mainland.
- As of July 2018, RIS identifies and informs people eligible to depart and coordinates their transfer with authorities in Athens. UNHCR will implement the logistical aspects of the transfers until 30 September 2018. The transfers will then be implemented by the Reception and Identification Service (RIS). UNHCR teams worked side-by-side with RIS staff to prepare for the handover.

- Some camps in the mainland are also overcrowded as a result of the shortage of accommodation. The Government is increasing accommodation in the existing camps, and is opening new ones. To assist these efforts, UNHCR offered shelter items to house 2,800 people. These are the final of over 2.5 million relief and shelter items UNHCR provided in Greece as part of the refugee response. Work remains however to ensure that new camps have sufficient medical and social support for the residents.
- In Evros, the Greece – Turkey land border, UNHCR’s protection team helps new arrivals at Fylakio, RIC, focusing on the proper identification and referral of asylum-seekers, unaccompanied children and those with specific needs.
- UNHCR through its partners have helped over 7,220 asylum-seekers and beneficiaries of international protection with counselling and legal representation on asylum procedures, family reunification, child protection, protection of SGBV survivors and other issues related to accessing rights. Over 570 people were also assisted with legal aid at the appeal stage of the asylum procedure through UNHCR’s funded partners.
- UNHCR’s Experts advise the Asylum Service caseworkers upon request how to conduct interviews, draft decisions on asylum applications and provide on-the-job training. In 2018 UNHCR has assisted in over 9,500 instances.
- UNHCR with partners in Greece helped over 1,000 people with disabilities or serious mental health conditions with hospitalization, consultation, peer-counselling or dedicated carers, medical equipment and by directing them to national services.
- UNHCR [HELP website](#) answers refugees and asylum-seekers questions on [how to apply for asylum](#), on their [rights and obligations](#), and on accessing services when [living in Greece](#).

Child Protection

- There are 3,920 unaccompanied children in Greece but only 1,191 places in shelters and SIL apartments (Source: EKKA, as of 15 August). As a result, many children spend lengthy periods in protective custody, in the RICs on the islands and Evros waiting for a place in age-appropriate shelters, while others stay in informal housing or risk homelessness.
- Living conditions for unaccompanied and separated children remain alarming especially in Moria RIC, Lesbos where children often share shelter with adults, in Vathy RIC, Samos where the designated area remains without security, and on Evros where there is limited support and services for children at the RIC.
- On the islands and the land-border, UNHCR helps the authorities protect children from risk with child-friendly spaces, informal education as well as with case management, legal aid, and psychosocial support.
- UNHCR also identifies children at risk and provides advice, technical support and trainings to the authorities and actors.
- This year, UNHCR’s partner has transferred 512 unaccompanied children from RICs and police stations to temporary facilities in the mainland, until their eventual transfer to designated shelters.
- UNHCR has also developed Supported Independent Living (SIL) –in its pilot phase in Crete – where EKKA guardians and dedicated teams support children over 16 years old live on their own.

- UNHCR transfers boys and girls who turn eighteen to apartments in its Accommodation Scheme which helps free space in shelters for younger children.
- In 2018, 20 children departed from Greece to the UK within the framework of the Dubs Scheme, with another seven to depart shortly. UNHCR has worked with the authorities to develop panels which identify children eligible to relocate under the scheme, by considering their needs and best interests.

Prevention and Response to Sexual and Gender-based Violence

- Sexual harassment and violence, including against men and boys, constitutes a major risk in the RICs and some mainland sites. The limited number of specialized services, interpreters and police officers hinders the management of cases and exacerbates feelings of insecurity among the refugee population. Accessing hygiene facilities and uncoordinated shelter allocation arrangements are of particular concern, especially for single women and mothers.
- UNHCR refers women survivors and those at risk to State services and shelters or accommodation in apartments. Unfortunately, limited interpretation means that refugees cannot always access State services.
- On the islands UNHCR identifies survivors and people at risk, offers legal information and counselling and refers them to appropriate services also through partners. However, the limited services in some of the RICs mean that survivors cannot always access them on time.
- In the mainland, UNHCR works to prevent and respond to gender-based violence through national NGOs in some of the mainland sites and urban locations in Athens, Thessaly and Thessaloniki.
- Finally, UNHCR raises awareness and trains NGOs and authorities on how to prevent and respond to SGBV.

Education

- UNHCR with UNICEF and other actors support the Ministry of Education ensure that all refugee children go to school.
- Last year, 8,017 asylum-seeking and refugee children went to school, of the estimated 10,000 – 12,000 in Greece ([Ministry of Education](#)).
- For the school year 2018 – 2019, the Ministry established afternoon classes also on the islands, for students in primary and secondary education. These aim to prepare them for the regular school curriculum the following year.
- On the islands, UNHCR supports complementary, non-formal education where formal education is not available for many children.

Health

- UNHCR works with the Ministry of Health, KEELPNO and partners to help refugees and asylum-seekers access healthcare.
- Across the islands and on some camps in the mainland the low number of staff under the Ministry of Health, in particular doctors and cultural mediators, is not sufficient to help refugees with medical and psychosocial needs. On the islands, this further delays

the vulnerability assessment which is an integral part of the asylum procedure and increases the risk of vulnerable people going unnoticed.

- The limited public mental health institutions in Greece are of particular concern. UNHCR with partners work on ways to link those affected by mental health conditions with public institutions.
- UNHCR funds primary and psychosocial support services in Lesvos and mental health services in Attika. There psychiatrists and psychologists provide services at the polyclinic of the municipality of Athens.

Durable Solutions

- As of July 2018, 7,976 had received refugee status or subsidiary protection in Greece, and 10,351 in the entire 2017.
- There is a pressing need to support refugees lead a normal life, go to school, get healthcare and earn a living. This requires key documents that allow access to services and national schemes, enable refugees to work and help their eventual integration in the host communities.
- UNHCR's partners support residents in the accommodation scheme access key documents such as a tax and a social insurance number, and with job matching or referral to develop skills, vocational trainings and language courses. Residents are also supported with translation to help them access healthcare and enrol in schools as well as psychosocial, education and legal support.
- In August 2018, some 4,734 beneficiaries of international and subsidiary protection were accommodated in UNHCR's apartments, and 7,600 received cash assistance.
- Of those in UNHCR's accommodation, 91% have an AMKA social security number, 55% have an AFM tax number, and 18% are registered with OAED agency for programmes and other assistance to help them find work. Additionally, 71% of children residing in accommodation were enrolled in schools (as of 28 August 2018).

Relocation and Returns

- The relocation programme of asylum-seekers from Greece to other EU Member States concluded in September 2017. In total 22,000 people departed.
- This month, 17 people [returned from Greece to Turkey](#) in the framework of the E.U. - Turkey Statement, with 1,690 people in total since 20 March 2016.

Shelter

- UNHCR with partners and in coordination with the Municipality of Lesvos, support the site management of Kara Tepe and transit site in Skala Sikamineas providing a set of protection and basic assistance services.

Logistics

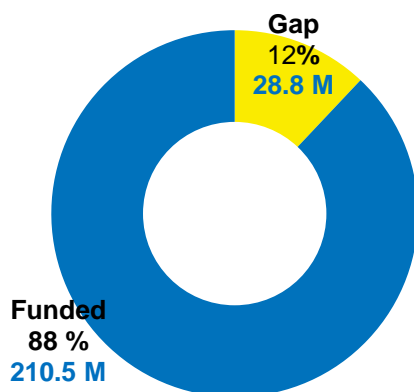
- As many of the sites in the mainland are remote from services and public transportation UNHCR has facilitated people's access to the Asylum Service or other services by providing transportation to over 4,080 people around Greece in August.

Partners

In August, UNHCR worked through 33 partners. UNHCR worked on Accommodation with ARSIS, Iliaktida, Intersos, NOSTOS, Praksis, Solidarity Now, Catholic Relief Services, Terre des Hommes, and the Local Authorities of Athens, Piraeus, Thessaloniki, Livadia, Crete, Trikala, Nea Filadelfia – Nea Chalkidona, Karditsa, Larissa and Tripoli; on Cash Assistance with Catholic Relief Services, and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies; on Legal Aid with METAdrasi and the Greek Council for Refugees; on Child Protection with ARSIS, METAdrasi, Network for Children’s Rights, and Praksis; on PwSN with ARSIS, Doctors of the World, the National Confederation of Disabled People, the Association for Regional Development and Mental Health (EPAPSY) and Kinoniko EKAV; on Prevention and Response to SGBV with Diotima and PRAKSIS; on Peaceful Coexistence and Integration with Solidarity Now, ARSIS, Faros, the Greek Council for Refugees, Intersos, and KEAN; on Site Management Support (SMS) with the International Rescue Committee; on Interpretation Services and Messaging with METAdrasi; on Awareness Raising with the Hellenic Theatre/Drama & Education Network (TENet); and on the Deployment of Affiliate Workforce with UNOPS and the International Catholic Migration Commission.

FUNDING (AS OF 4 SEPTEMBER 2018)

USD 239.3 M requested for the Greece Operation



Donors

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

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Thanks to the donors of the Greece Operation in 2018

European Union 209.6 M | Private donors Switzerland 0.5 M | Fondation BNP Paribas 0.3M

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