

Greece

Sea arrivals peaked this month with 4,000 people. Land arrivals through Evros also increased to 1,400. Some mainland camps are overcrowded while the situation is worse in islands' reception centres,

especially those of Samos and Lesbos. The dire conditions can have serious consequences for asylum-seekers' health, safety and protection, especially for children and other vulnerable people. The Government

increased accommodation in the mainland and transferred more people from the islands with UNHCR's support. More is needed to ease overcrowding and improve conditions.

REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS IN GREECE*

64,900

17,600 on the islands and **47,300** in the mainland

Arrivals



*UNHCR estimate as of 30 September 2018 of those who arrived and remained in Greece since the 2015 – 2016 flow.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

54,600

eligible asylum-seekers and refugees this month, and 87,800 since April 2017 received **cash assistance**.

2,600

people this month, and 33,500 since June 2016 from the islands **transferred** to the mainland with UNHCR support.

21,500

people this month, and 52,300 since November 2015 have benefitted from UNHCR's **accommodation in apartments**.

UNHCR PRESENCE

Staff:

289 National Staff

39 International Staff

Offices:

1 Country Office in Athens

2 Sub Offices in
Thessaloniki, Lesbos

4 Field Offices in Attika,
Chios, Samos, Kos

4 Field Units in Evros,
Ioannina, Leros,
Rhodes



Families living in makeshift shelter outside the overcrowded Moria RIC, Lesbos, vulnerable against the weather and with limited access to toilets, showers and other services.

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, municipalities, 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 Greek authorities. UNHCR works closely with staff from State agencies to prepare 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. Additionally, the host population benefits from the 4,265 apartments and 25 buildings that the programme rents in 21 cities across Greece. UNHCR had 25,669 accommodation places in September.
- In September UNHCR gave cash in the form of pre-paid cards to 54,545 asylum-seekers and refugees. Cash preserves refugees' dignity and allows them to choose what they need most. It is spent on goods and services, and so it also contributes to the local community. In September, nearly 5.5 million euro in cash assistance will eventually be re-injected into the local economy.

Protection

- The islands' Reception and Identification Centres (RICs) are overcrowded, particularly in Lesbos and Samos where four times more people live than the available space. As a result, refugees, including many pregnant women and elderly live in inappropriate shelter or lack basic relief items, such as hygiene kits. Refugees' frustration and anxiety is mounting amid dire conditions, also as a result of their lengthy stay in the centres.
- To ease overcrowding the Ministry of Migration Policy (MoMP) with UNHCR's support accelerated the transfer of eligible asylum-seekers from the islands to the mainland. In total 2,602 people were transferred from Lesbos (1,895), Samos (394), Kos (114), Chios (103) Leros (89) and Rhodes (7). As of July 2018, the Reception and Identification Service (RIS) identifies and informs those eligible to depart in most islands and coordinates their departure. UNHCR will implement the logistical aspects of the transfers until 31 December 2018.
- The accelerated transfers this month were possible also because the MoMP increased accommodation with IOM support in buildings and hotels in Northern Greece.

- The Government is also increasing accommodation in existing camps in the mainland and opening new ones. To assist these efforts, UNHCR offered shelter items to house 3,000 people. This was part of over 2.5 million relief and shelter items UNHCR provided to the refugee response in Greece since 2015. Work remains however to ensure that new camps are ready for winter and have sufficient medical and social support for residents.
- UNHCR's team in Evros, the Greece - Turkey land border helps new arrivals at Fylakio, RIC, focusing on the proper identification and referral of asylum-seekers, unaccompanied children and those with specific needs.
- UNHCR and 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 10,400 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](#).
- This month, UNHCR, the MoMP, the European Commission's Structural Reform Support Service (SRSS) and the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) signed a Joint Declaration of Intent, launching a joint project that aims to develop the operational and institutional capacity of the MoMP in the field of reception.

Child Protection

- There are 3,320 unaccompanied children in Greece but only 1,191 places in shelters and SIL apartments (Source: EKKA, as of 15 September). As a result, many children spend lengthy periods in protective custody or in the RICs on the islands and Evros waiting for a place in age-appropriate shelters or other facilities, while others stay in informal housing or risk homelessness.
- Living conditions for unaccompanied and separated children remain alarming. The situation is particularly worrying in Moria RIC, Lesbos where children often share shelter with adults and in Vathy RIC, Samos where the designated area remains without security. On Evros there is limited support and services for children at the RIC.
- On the islands, UNHCR helps the authorities protect children from risk with child-friendly spaces, informal education, 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, 22 children departed from Greece to the UK within the framework of the Dubs Scheme. 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, is 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 perpetuates feelings of insecurity among the refugee population. Limited access to toilets and showers, and the uncoordinated allocation of shelter 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, 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.
- Refugee students living in apartments and in eight sites are studying alongside Greek students in school. Some 3,500 children housed in UNHCR apartments are enrolled in schools; half of the estimated school-age population in apartments.
- For the school year 2018 – 2019, the Ministry established preparatory afternoon classes in addition to the mainland also on the islands for refugee students in primary and secondary education. These aim to prepare them for the regular school curriculum of next 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.
- The limited public mental health institutions in Greece are a 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 August 2018, 9,245 people 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 important 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 September 2018, some 4,824 beneficiaries of international and subsidiary protection were accommodated in UNHCR's apartments, and 7,830 received cash assistance.
- Of those in UNHCR's accommodation, 92% have an AMKA social security number, 57% have an AFM tax number, and 20% are registered with OAED agency for programmes and other assistance to help them find work. Additionally, 72% of children residing in accommodation were enrolled in schools (as of 25 September 2018).
- UNHCR is supporting the Government translate the National Integration Strategy into action.

Returns and Relocation

- This month, 48 people [returned from Greece to Turkey](#) in the framework of the E.U. - Turkey Statement, with 1,738 people in total since 20 March 2016.
- The relocation programme of asylum-seekers from Greece to other EU Member States concluded in September 2017. In total 22,000 people departed.

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

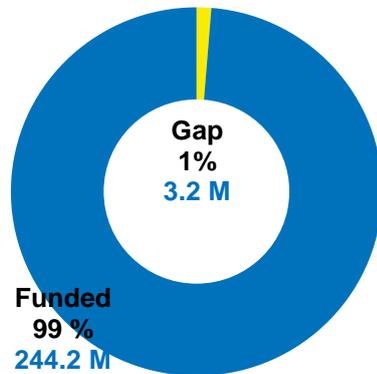
- As many of the sites in the mainland are remote from services and public transportation UNHCR facilitates people's access to the Asylum Service and other services. UNHCR provided transportation to nearly 5,000 people around Greece in September.

Public Information

The interactive art project [Face Forward ...into my home](#), a joint production of the National Museum of Contemporary Art, Athens (EMST) and UNHCR opened in Crete on 14 September 2018 in the framework of the Municipality of Heraklion Festival "Crete, one history, 5+1 civilisations". The exhibition, previously held in Athens, includes portraits and audio human stories of ESTIA beneficiaries. This time it expanded with the participation of refugees residing on the island.

Partners

In September, 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 (NCDP), the Association for Regional Development and Mental Health (EPAPSY) and Kinoniko EKAV; on Prevention and Response to SGBV with Diotima, PRAKSIS and ARSIS; 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 and the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC); 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 (ICMC).

FUNDING (AS OF 10 OCTOBER 2018)**USD 247.4 M** requested for the Greece Operation**Donors****Special thanks to the major donors of unrestricted and regional funds in 2018**

Sweden 98.2 M | Private donors Spain 58.7 M | United Kingdom 45.3 M | Norway 42.5 M | Netherlands 39.1 M | Private donors Republic of Korea 28.5 M | Denmark 25.5 M | Switzerland 15.8 M | Private donors Italy 15.1 M | Private donors Japan 14.6 M | France 14 M | Germany 13.7 M | Italy 11.2 M | Private donors Sweden 11.2 M

Thanks to other donors of unrestricted and regional funds in 2018

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

Thanks to major donors of situational, thematic, regional, sub-regional funds 2018

United States of America 28.7 M | Private donors of Australia 8.6 M | European Union | Italy | Norway | Sweden | Private donors

Thanks to the donors of the Greece Operation in 2018

European Union 232.5 M | Private donors Switzerland 0.5 M | Private donors 0.9 M | Fondation BNP Paribas 0.3 M | International Organization for Migration 0.1 M

CONTACTS

Eleni Biza, Associate Reporting Officer, Greece,

BIZA@unhcr.org, Tel: +30 216 200 7809, Cell +30 695 558 5567

Michail Agorastakis, Information Management Associate, Greece,

AGORASTA@unhcr.org, Tel: +30 216 200 7946, Cell +30 695 1941546

LINKS

[Mediterranean Situation](#) - [UNHCR Greece](#) - [Twitter](#) - [Facebook](#) – ‘Face Forward ...into my home’ exhibition in Heraklion, Crete