

Greece

4,100 people arrived by sea this month, half of whom to Samos where the population in Vathy reception centre exceeded its capacity by six times. **Arrivals by land through Evros increased**

slightly to 1,550. The shortage of accommodation for asylum-seekers country-wide has led to extreme overcrowding in island centres and many mainland sites. This translates into increased protection risks

including of sexual violence for children who are on their own and other vulnerable asylum-seekers. UNHCR welcomed the **relocation agreement between Greece and Portugal.**

REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS IN GREECE*

67,100

17,900 on the islands and **49,200** in the mainland

Arrivals



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

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

56,700

eligible asylum-seekers and refugees this month, and 90,400 since April 2017 received **cash assistance.**

2,300

people this month, and 35,700 since June 2016 from the islands **transferred** to the mainland with UNHCR support.

21,600

people this month, and 53,400 since November 2015 have benefitted from UNHCR's **accommodation in apartments.**

UNHCR PRESENCE

Staff:

287 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



A couple makes bread in front of makeshift shelters at Vathy reception centre on the island of Samos. Asylum-seekers here are struggling to cope with severe overcrowding, dire living conditions and limited access to basic services, including healthcare.

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 4,306 apartments and 23 buildings that the programme rents in 21 cities across Greece. UNHCR had 25,898 accommodation places in October.
- In October UNHCR gave cash in the form of pre-paid cards to **56,674** 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 October, nearly 5.7 million euro in cash assistance will eventually be re-injected into the local economy.

Protection

- The conditions in the islands' Reception and Identification Centres (RICs) have reached a critical level, particularly in Lesbos and Samos where thousands of refugees have set up pop-up tents in nearby fields. On other islands like Chios and Kos, refugees, including many pregnant women and elderly live cramped in inappropriate shelter or lack basic relief items, such as hygiene kits.
- To ease overcrowding the Ministry of Migration Policy (MoMP) with UNHCR's support continues with accelerated transfers of eligible asylum-seekers from the islands to the mainland. In total 2,255 people were transferred from Lesbos (1,119), Samos (590), Chios (422), Kos (79) and Leros (45) this month. 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 covers the transportation costs of those transferred to the mainland until 31 December 2018.
- The accelerated transfers were possible also because the MoMP increased accommodation with IOM support in buildings and hotels across Greece.
- The Government is also increasing accommodation in existing camps in the mainland and preparing additional ones. To assist these efforts, UNHCR offered shelter items to

house 3,000 people, as 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 in the mainland are ready for winter and have sufficient medical and social support for residents. The shortage of accommodation country-wide is increasingly leading to the overcrowding of many mainland camps, creating tension and increasing protection risks for the residents.
- UNHCR's team in Evros, at the Greece - Turkey land border helps asylum-seekers who have recently arrived at the Fylakio, RIC by ensuring they are identified properly and that unaccompanied children and those with specific needs are directed to appropriate services.
- UNHCR and its partners have helped over 8,830 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 590 people were also assisted with legal aid at the appeal stage of the asylum procedure through UNHCR-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 12,000 instances.
- UNHCR with partners 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 3,637 unaccompanied and separated children in Greece but only 1,210 places in shelters and SIL apartments (Source: EKKA, as of 31 October). 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. 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 lacks the basics with broken doors and limited mattresses. 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 614 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, 23 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, as a result of limited services in some of the RICs, 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 to ensure that all refugee children go to school. The Ministry estimates that over 11,000 refugee and asylum-seeking children attend formal education on the islands and the mainland.
- Refugee students living in apartments and in eight sites around Greece attend school alongside their Greek peers. An estimated 3,500 children housed in UNHCR apartments are enrolled in schools – half of the estimated school-age population in apartments.
- Additionally, the Ministry estimates that 8,000 children living in reception sites are enrolled in schools, and 800 more in kindergarten.
- The Ministry established preparatory afternoon classes in addition to the mainland also on the islands for 2018 – 2019 for refugee students in primary and secondary education. An estimated 2,500 children attend these, which aim to prepare them for the regular school curriculum next year. These classes started on 15 October in Lesvos and Chios.

- 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 healthcare and psychosocial support services in Lesbos and mental health services in Attika. There, psychiatrists and psychologists provide services at the polyclinic of the municipality of Athens.

Durable Solutions

- As of October 2018, 12,458 people had received refugee status or subsidiary protection in Greece this year, 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 October 2018, some 5,071 beneficiaries of international and subsidiary protection were accommodated in UNHCR's apartments, and 9,500 received cash assistance.
- Of those in UNHCR's accommodation, 92% have an AMKA social security number, 59% have an AFM tax number, and 25% are registered with OAED agency for programmes and other assistance to help them find work. Additionally, 74% of children residing in accommodation were enrolled in schools (as of 30 October 2018).
- UNHCR is supporting the Government translate the National Integration Strategy into action.

Returns and Relocation

- This month, 17 people **returned** from Greece to Turkey in the framework of the E.U. - Turkey Statement, with 1,755 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 for new arrivals in Skala Sikamineas providing a set of protection and basic assistance services.

Logistics

- As many of the sites in the mainland and some in the islands are remote from services and public transportation UNHCR facilitates people's access to the Asylum Service and other services around Greece.

Partners

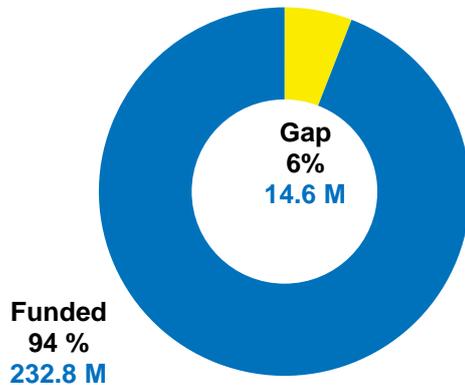
In October, UNHCR worked through 32 partners. UNHCR worked on Accommodation with [ARSIS](#), [Iliaktida](#), [INTERSOS](#), [NOSTOS](#), [Praksis](#), [Solidarity Now](#), [Catholic Relief Services](#), [Terre des Hommes](#), and the Local Authorities of Athens, Piraeus, Thessaloniki, Livadia, Crete, 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), and the [Association for Regional Development and Mental Health](#) (EPAPSY); 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).

LINKS

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

FUNDING (AS OF 05 NOVEMBER 2018)

USD 247.4 M

 requested for the Greece Operation


Donors

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European Union 225.3 M | Private donors Switzerland 505 K | Fondation BNP Paribas 341 K | IOM 100 K

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