

# Greece

**Sea and land arrivals decreased by half this month, to 2,100 and 750 respectively.** This, along with the accelerated transfers and the establishment of additional shelter options on the mainland succeeded

in bringing the **population in Chios' reception centre down to capacity.** The situation remained dire in **Samos where the reception centre hosts six times its capacity** and the rain aggravates further living conditions.

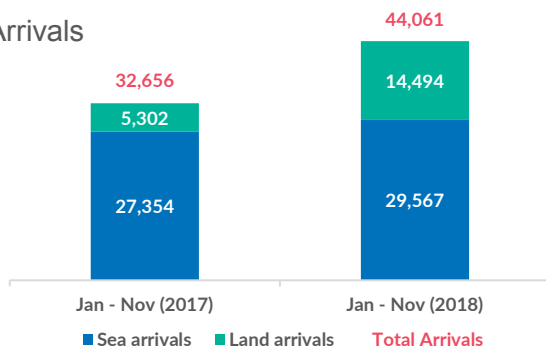
Over 2,500 people continued to stay in tents and makeshift shelter in Moria. **UNHCR urged the Government to tackle the conditions on Samos and Lesvos with emergency measures.**

## REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS IN GREECE\*

**69,300**

**16,000** on the islands and **53,300** in the mainland

Arrivals



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

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

**61,000**

eligible asylum-seekers and refugees this month, and 96,392 since April 2017 received **cash assistance.**

**3,060**

people this month, and 38,754 since June 2016 from the islands **transferred** to the mainland with UNHCR support.

**22,300**

people this month, and 54,781 since November 2015 have benefitted from UNHCR's **accommodation in apartments.**

## UNHCR PRESENCE

### Staff:

289 National Staff

37 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



An elderly woman crouches in front of makeshift shelters at Moria reception centre on the island of Lesvos, where asylum-seekers struggle 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 4,427 apartments and 23 buildings that the programme rents in 21 cities across Greece. UNHCR had 26,526 accommodation places in November.
- In November, UNHCR gave cash in the form of pre-paid cards to 60,983 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 November, nearly 6.1 million euro in cash assistance will eventually be re-injected into the local economy.

### Protection

- Overcrowding in the islands' Reception and Identification Centres (RICs) eased this month, primarily on Chios, as a result of increased transfers to the mainland which for the first time in 2018 exceeded the monthly arrivals. However, the sites of Samos and Lesbos continue to operate beyond their capacity with thousands of refugees living in unsuitable tents or makeshift shelter in nearby fields. The worsening weather conditions aggravate the already difficult situation.
- 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 3,060 people were transferred from Lesbos (1,003), Samos (918), Chios (759), Leros (240) and Kos (140) 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 9,960 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 600 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 13,200 instances.
- 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](#). Over 25,000 people have accessed the website in 2018.

### Child Protection

- There are 3,680 unaccompanied and separated children in Greece but only 1,213 places in shelters and SIL apartments (Source: EKKA, as of 15 November). 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 mattresses leaving limited options to children but to sleep in shifts. 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 652 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 parents and women.
- 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. This year's **16 Days of Activism** campaign against gender-based violence of refugees in the workplace started across Greece with activities ranging from **info sessions**, a one day festival, art events, community discussions, trainings, **social cohesion and recreational activities**, **screening of short films** as well as conferences.

### **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 country-wide.
- 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 in kindergarten.
- In addition to the mainland, preparatory afternoon classes on the islands this year for refugees in primary and secondary education aim to prepare children attend the regular school curriculum the following year. An estimated 2,500 children attend these.

- 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 November 2018, 14,012 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 November 2018, some 5,246 beneficiaries of international and subsidiary protection were accommodated in UNHCR's apartments, and 10,600 received cash assistance. Of those in UNHCR's accommodation, 93% have an AMKA social security number, 62% have an AFM tax number, and 27% are registered with OAED agency for programmes and other assistance to help them find work. Additionally, 75% of children residing in accommodation were enrolled in schools (as of 20 November 2018).
- UNHCR advocates for the in-practice inclusion of beneficiaries of international protection into national social solidarity schemes, as for example the Social Solidarity Income and the Rental Allowance Scheme. While eligible, many are excluded because they cannot fulfil the technical requirements, as for example owning a house, or having a lease in their name.
- UNHCR is a key partner in the Government's preparations for the implementation of the National Strategy for the integration of refugees and migrants.

### Returns and Relocation

- This month, 40 people [returned](#) from Greece to Turkey in the framework of the E.U. - Turkey Statement, with 1,795 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.

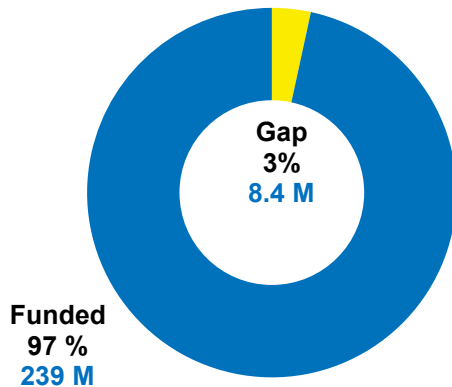
### Partners

In November, UNHCR worked through 30 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, Herakleion, 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 Assistance 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](#), 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 DECEMBER 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 71 M | Netherlands 47.1 M | United Kingdom 45.3 M | Norway 42.5 M | Private donors Republic of Korea 32 M | Japan 26.5 M | Denmark 25.5 M | Private donors Japan 17.9 M | Private donors Italy 16.8 M | Switzerland 15.8 M | France 14 M | Germany 13.7 M | Private donors Sweden 13.2 M | Italy 11.2 M

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

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United States of America 55 M | Private donors Australia 13.3 M | Private donors Sweden 2.4 M | Private donors Republic of Korea 2.3 M | European Union | Germany | Japan | Norway | Sweden | Private donors

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

European Union 225.3 M | Private donors Switzerland 505 K | Fondation BNP Paribas 341 K | IOM 99.7 K

## CONTACTS

**Eleni Biza**, Associate Reporting Officer, Greece,  
[BIZA@unhcr.org](mailto:BIZA@unhcr.org), Tel: +30 216 200 7809, Cell +30 695 558 5567

**Michail Agorastakis**, Information Management Associate, Greece,  
[AGORASTA@unhcr.org](mailto:AGORASTA@unhcr.org), Tel: +30 216 200 7946, Cell +30 695 1941546