

Greece

Arrivals remained low this month with **450 people reaching Greece**, mostly by sea. UNHCR [called on](#) Greece to investigate multiple reports alleging **pushbacks** of people by the Greek authorities

at the country's sea and land borders. UNHCR [urged](#) for efficient **safety net and integration opportunities** to help refugees become self-reliant as new Government policy ended

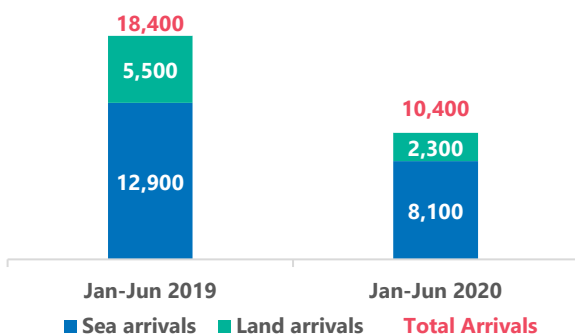
assistance for thousands of recognized refugees. Lacking an income, UNHCR fears that many might be pushed into **poverty and homelessness**, especially the most vulnerable ones.

REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS IN GREECE*

122,000

86,500 in the mainland and **35,500** on the islands

Arrivals



*UNHCR estimate as of 30 June 2020 of those who arrived and remained in Greece since the 2015 – 2016 flow.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

92,100

eligible asylum-seekers and refugees this month, and **183,400** since April 2017 received **cash assistance**.

22,600

people this month, and **67,500** since November 2015 have benefitted from UNHCR's **accommodation in apartments**.

PEOPLE IN UNHCR'S ESTIA ACCOMMODATION

72% children enrolled in schools

66% have access to healthcare (AMKA or PAAYPA)

57% have tax identification number (AFM)

23% registered with unemployment agency (OAED)

5% have a bank account

UNHCR PRESENCE

Staff:

318 National Staff

34 International Staff

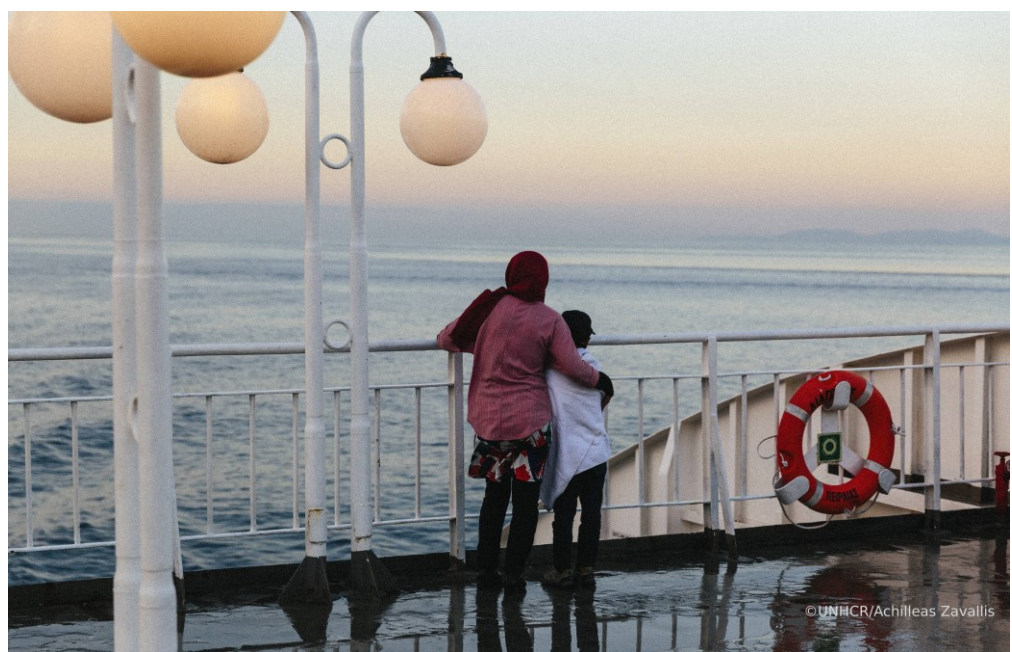
Offices:

1 Country Office in Athens

2 Sub Offices in Thessaloniki, Lesbos

3 Field Offices in Chios, Samos, Kos

4 Field Units in Evros, Ioannina, Leros, Rhodes



UNHCR transfers asylum-seekers to safer accommodation on mainland Greece.

Working with Partners

- UNHCR supports the Government of Greece which leads the refugee response, working closely with other United Nations agencies, international and national NGOs, regional and State institutions, municipalities, grassroots organizations, refugee communities and the local society.

Main Activities

COVID-19 Prevention and Response

- UNHCR [helps](#) the Greek Government's prevention and response to COVID-19 in the reception centres by increasing water and sanitation capacity, providing core relief and hygiene items, installing health units for screening and isolation, distributing additional cash assistance, facilitating information dissemination through helplines and interpreters and enhancing its coordination role with UN agencies, NGOs and authorities.
- UNHCR protects the population at high risk of COVID-19 complications in the island reception centres – where it is difficult to apply social distancing measures. Since mid-March UNHCR has moved **1,385 people** to safer accommodation, such as hotels and ESTIA apartments.
- On the islands and in Evros, UNHCR has provided **18 medical units** for screening and isolation as well as **166 portable units** for hygiene and sanitation, including chemical toilets, showers and hand washing stations.
- UNHCR has provided over **137,000 hygiene items** such as soap and baby care kits, **40,500 core relief items**, such as blankets and sleeping bags, as well as more than **76,000 personal protective equipment** for front-line workers.
- UNHCR facilitates access to quality information for asylum-seekers via helplines, interpretation, the [HELP](#) website, [podcasts](#), [radio spots](#), [a YouTube channel](#). UNHCR also assists refugee communities offer help to residents in the island reception centres. This month on [Chios](#) refugees from 13 different countries formed volunteer groups to address issues of hygiene and health, among others.
- UNHCR and partners running non-formal education centres ensure that classrooms are adequately equipped, distances are observed, and children can learn in a safe environment.

Accommodation and Cash Assistance

- UNHCR runs the EU-funded [ESTIA accommodation](#) and [cash assistance](#) programmes in cooperation with the Government, municipalities and NGOs. UNHCR works closely with staff from State agencies for the transition of these programmes to the Greek authorities.
- UNHCR [expressed deep concern](#) over the government decision this month to end assistance for some 9,000 refugees from Greece's reception system who have been

recognized as refugees. Assistance for many recognized refugees is ending prematurely, before they can effectively enter employment and social welfare schemes, foreseen by Greek law. Most of the affected refugees do not have regular income, many are families with school-aged children, single parents, survivors of violence, and others with specific needs. UNHCR has been urging authorities to apply a phased approach, and a higher threshold to extend assistance to vulnerable people who cannot leave at this stage.

- Apartments in cities and towns offer asylum-seekers and refugees greater dignity and independence. The host population also benefits from the **4,650 apartments and eight buildings** that the programme rents in **21 cities and towns** across Greece. UNHCR had **25,800 accommodation places** this month.
- UNHCR gave cash in the form of pre-paid cards to **92,100 asylum-seekers and refugees** in apartments and sites. In June, more than **9 million euro** in cash assistance will eventually be re-injected into the local economy.

Protection

- UNHCR [urged](#) Greece to investigate multiple reports of pushbacks by Greek authorities at the country's sea and land borders, allegedly returning migrants and asylum-seekers to Turkey after they had reached Greek territory or territorial waters. UNHCR has continuously addressed its concerns with the Greek government and called for urgent inquiries into a series of alleged incidents which have increased since March. Many of them are corroborated by non-governmental organizations and direct testimonies.
- The Racist Violence Recording Network coordinated by UNHCR and the National Commission for Human Rights, presented its [annual report](#) for 2019. In **half of the 100 incidents reported**, the targets were migrants, refugees or asylum-seekers and human rights defenders due to their connection with refugees and migrants, as well as shelters for unaccompanied children.
- To mark [World Refugee Day](#) in the midst of the pandemic, UNHCR together with refugee and [host communities](#) as well as partners in Greece shared their vision for a more inclusive world through [sports](#), [education](#), a [solidarity video](#), [over Facebook live on culture and cuisine](#) and with [virtual and local events](#).
- The population in the reception centres dropped this month to **30,000 people**, but the centres remain overly crowded with few specialized services. The situation has become precarious, with violence being a major risk for refugees, especially women and children.
- UNHCR's team at the land border in Evros, helps those arriving at the Fylakio reception centre, such as families and unaccompanied children, to access necessary services, provides information and helps the authorities identify those with specific needs who require special assistance.
- UNHCR helps strengthen the national system and expertise by seconding **69 experts** to the various State agencies to bolster their response and by organizing trainings for Governmental staff.
- UNHCR supports the Asylum Service with experts who advise the caseworkers upon request on how to conduct interviews, draft decisions on asylum applications and provide on-the-job training. UNHCR assisted in **6,727 instances in 2020, and 54,858**

since 2016. This work has multiplying benefits beyond these instances promoting high quality in asylum processing and ensuring the integrity of the procedure.

- From the beginning of 2020, UNHCR and its partners have helped over **5,750 asylum-seekers and beneficiaries of international protection** with counselling and legal representation in order to prepare and support their cases, as for example for family reunification procedures.
- UNHCR [HELP website](#) answers questions in seven languages on [how to apply for asylum](#), on [rights and obligations](#), and on available services when [living in Greece](#).

Child Protection

- With close to **4,700 children** alone in Greece, only **one in four** has a place in an appropriate shelter ([EKKA data](#) as of June). As a result, their well-being and safety are at-risk, especially on the islands where living conditions are trying.
- UNHCR identifies vulnerable children and supports them with legal aid and psychosocial support through partners, and boosts the response of the Government with expertise, trainings and advice. In the last two months, UNHCR and the European Asylum Support Office has trained approximately **245 front-line workers** on how to assess the best interest of a child; a critical step for relocation processes, among other.
- Since January 2020, UNHCR's partner METAdrasi has safely moved **222 unaccompanied children** from reception centres to temporary shelters on the mainland.
- UNHCR provides places in [semi-independent living apartments](#) for **44 unaccompanied children** over 16 years old, mentoring and empowering them to become self-reliant and to live on their own. For younger children, UNHCR works with foster families to cater to the needs of **45 unaccompanied or separated children**.

Prevention and Response to Sexual and Gender-based Violence

- Lack of privacy, inadequate lighting and long distance to toilets and showers foster risks of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in the sites.
- UNHCR and its partners work to prevent and respond to SGBV in urban areas as well as some field locations and islands to identify [survivors](#), including men and LGBTI persons, as well as people at-risk, offering case management, legal information, counselling, psychosocial and medical attention through partners. UNHCR refers those affected to State services and shelters or accommodation in apartments where they can get expert help.
- The pandemic and containment measures further foment the risk of SGBV and UNHCR piloted – through its partner – an online help desk to provide easier and instant assistance and information on the available services.
- UNHCR supports the authorities strengthen the national reporting mechanism on trafficking, especially on the islands where the situation is more challenging.

Education

- UNHCR with UNICEF and other actors support the [Ministry of Education](#) to include refugee boys and girls in public education.

- In the current school year, **81% of recognized refugee children in ESTIA** accommodation are enrolled into public schools alongside their Greek peers. UNHCR estimates that **9,000 school-aged children** (4-17) are on the Aegean islands, while only a handful attend public schools.
- UNHCR joins forces with teachers and students to increase awareness on forced displacement and human rights through [experiential learning](#) techniques. This month, over **1,300 primary and secondary school children**, including refugee students from 36 cities throughout Greece, participated in this year's arts [contest](#) organized by UNHCR and the Youth Awareness Committee.

Health

- UNHCR works with the [Ministry of Health](#), the [National Public Health Organization](#) (EODY) and partners to help refugees and asylum-seekers gain entry into the health care system, also in coordination with the [World Health Organization](#).
- Medical treatment and essential medication are scant for many asylum-seekers mainly due to the limited capacity of EODY staff and the pending issuance of the temporary health number (PAAYPE) which, in principle, allows asylum-seekers to obtain free healthcare.
- UNHCR supports primary healthcare and psychosocial support services in Lesbos and mental health services in Attika and Thessaloniki. UNHCR works with experts to train and build the skills of non-specialist refugees to offer basic psychosocial support and empower vulnerable refugees, including those with mental health conditions.

Durable Solutions

- Since 2013, **54,300** people acquired **refugee or subsidiary protection** in Greece ([Asylum Service](#) data as of February). In June, **6,400 recognised** refugees benefitted from cash assistance and **6,500 beneficiaries of international protection** were accommodated in UNHCR's apartments.
- UNHCR's partners support those living in the accommodation scheme with job matching or referral to develop skills, vocational trainings and language courses. Of the recognised refugees living in UNHCR's accommodation, **91% have an AMKA social security number, 77% have an AFM tax number, and 35%** are registered with **OAED unemployment agency**. However, only **10% have a bank account** which is a prerequisite for receiving a salary, among other.
- UNHCR supports the Government and Municipalities to ensure that recognized refugees get adequate support in their ongoing transition to self-reliance.
- UNHCR also helps refugees navigate the Greek civil, social and economic system and obtain much needed documents, such as travel papers and family certificates. These are necessary for refugees to find gainful employment and eventually be included in the Greek society. More language classes and job trainings for adults can accelerate refugees' integration.

Returns and Relocation

- UNHCR supports the Greek Government in its efforts to secure relocation places for unaccompanied children, as well as asylum-seekers and recognised refugees more broadly to other European States and offers advice and technical support.

- So far, **75 unaccompanied children** have relocated to Luxembourg, Germany and Ireland. UNHCR and its partners, in coordination with IOM, UNICEF and EASO, supported the authorities in the identification and selection of children according to their best interests as well as with their transportation to the mainland for their eventual departure.
- This month, **no people** were returned from Greece to Turkey in the framework of the E.U. - Turkey Statement, with a total of **2,054 people** [returned](#) since 20 March 2016.

Shelter and Basic Assistance

- UNHCR with partners is managing – in coordination with the Municipality of Lesvos – the Kara Tepe accommodation site which provides quality accommodation and protection to **1,000 vulnerable people or families**.

Partners

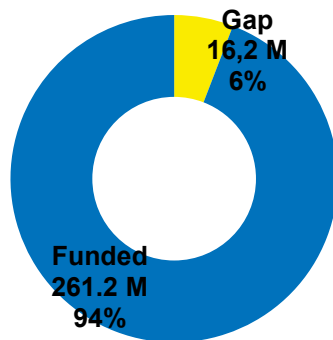
In June, UNHCR worked through **33 partners**: [UNICEF](#), [ARSIS](#), [Iliaktida](#), [INTERSOS](#), [NOSTOS](#), [Praksis](#), [Solidarity Now](#), [Catholic Relief Services](#), the [International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies](#), [METAdrasi](#), the [Greek Council for Refugees](#), the [Network for Children's Rights](#), [Doctors of the World](#), the [Association for Regional Development and Mental Health \(EPAPSY\)](#), [Diotima](#), [Faros](#), [International Rescue Committee](#), [International Catholic Migration Commission \(ICMC\)](#), [Hellenic Theatre/Drama & Education Network \(TENet\)](#), [UNOPS](#), [Perichoresis](#), [OMNES](#) and the Local Authorities of Athens, Piraeus, Thessaloniki, Livadia, Herakleion, Trikala, Nea Filadelfia – Nea Chalkidona, Karditsa, Larissa, Tripoli and Tilos.

LINKS

[Mediterranean Situation](#) – [UNHCR Greece](#) – [Twitter](#) – [Facebook](#) - [YouTube](#)

FUNDING (AS OF 22 JULY 2020)

USD 277.4 M requested for the Greece Operation



Donors

Special thanks to the major donors of unrestricted funds in 2020

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CONTACTS

Eleni Biza, Associate Reporting Officer, Greece

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

Elena Marda, Liaison Associate, Greece

marda@unhcr.org, Tel: +30 216 200 7855, Cell: +30 695 18 01 242

Michail Agorastakis, Information Management Associate, Greece

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