

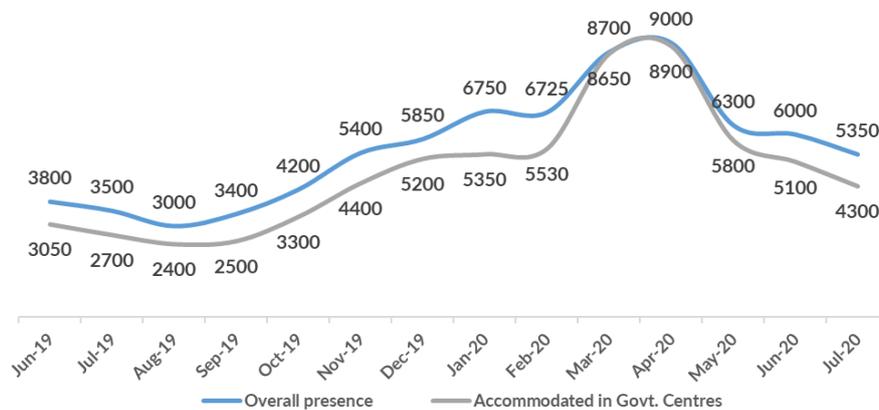
SERBIA MONTHLY UPDATE

In more than 120 field visits and remotely, UNHCR and partners provided information, counselling and interpretation in over 2,600 instances, **counselled over 1,200 foreigners** on seeking asylum in Serbia and supported the **integration** of 133 asylum seekers and refugees. One new asylum-seeker gave UNHCR project lawyers power of attorney to represent them in substantive asylum procedures. Partners Belgrade Centre for Human Rights (BCHR) and Danish Refugee Council (DRC) obtained 18 ID cards and 6 work permits for asylum-seekers. Twelve men and women asylum seekers participated regularly in intensive Serbian language classes provided by DRC in Banja Koviljača AC. Partner Psychosocial Innovation Network (PIN) organized a session with five recognized refugees to help explore entrepreneurship opportunities in Serbia.

UNHCR kept regular contact with 114 **refugees** and asylum-seekers in **private accommodation**, of whom 69 qualified for financial support, including 38 who had lost their income due to the COVID-19 situation.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, only two cases of Coronavirus infection have been confirmed among the refugee/migrant population, both with milder symptoms and recovering successfully in isolation. Refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants continue to enjoy unrestricted access to testing and health care, and all new arrivals are placed in 14-day quarantine by the authorities.

Two hundred and fifty-three **intentions** to seek asylum were registered in July (compared to 241 in June) and **six persons applied for asylum**. The **Asylum Office adjudicated on eight asylum applications** in the first instance, **rejecting all**.



The number of foreigners that **newly arrived** in Serbia and were profiled by UNHCR **rose by more than 60%** compared to June to **3,197** (from 1,973 in June); 94% arrived from North Macedonia and 3% from Albania (through Kosovo¹), smaller percentages from Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) and Montenegro.

Occupancy of Asylum (AC) or Reception/Transit Centres (RTC), again dropped from 5,121 at the beginning to **4,233** at the end of the month. They comprised 1,794 citizens of Afghanistan, 928 of Syria, 320 of Pakistan, 266 of Bangladesh, 240 of Iran, 147 of Iraq, and 538 from 43 other countries; 3,497 were adult men, 256 adult women and 480 children, including 131 unaccompanied or separated children (UASC). Four reception/transit centres accommodating mainly single men remain overcrowded.

The number of foreigners observed outside centres rose from 740 at the beginning to **825** at the end of the month. The number of recorded **collective expulsions** from neighbouring countries **rose by 24%** to **2,742**: 1,636 from Romania, 804 from Hungary, 222 from Croatia and 80 from BiH. Many victims alleged denial of access to asylum procedures or mistreatment by officials of these countries.

UNHCR partner DRC organized five **Covid-19 prevention workshops** for 24 asylum-seekers and migrants in Krnjača and Banja Koviljača ACs, in consultation with the epidemiologist of Palilula Public Health Centre. In cooperation with IDEAS and Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs (MOLEVSA), on 31 July the DRC conducted a workshop on prevention and protection against SGBV for eight outreach social workers from Belgrade, Sombor, Šid and Vranje. DRC also continued following up on all SGBV cases in governmental centres.

Partners PIN and Indigo provided **psycho-social counseling and support (PSS)** to 147 asylum-seekers and refugees both in asylum/reception centres and unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) institutions and remotely. UASCs reported these sessions help them cope more adaptively with prolonged periods of quarantine, as well as to understand better the reasons behind such strict measures. UNHCR supported an International Aid Network (IAN) psychiatrist to visit the Bogovada AC on July 29 and

¹ All reference to Kosovo should be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244.

provide psychiatric evaluation and treatment for five UASC; the psychiatrist will engage in monthly follow-up visits to Bogovada AC with support from UNHCR.

Cultural Mediators of partner Crisis Response and Policy Centre (CRPC) supported the home-schooling of six refugee schoolchildren, Serbian language and culture and English classes for 26 UASC at Bogovada AC and 12 arts & crafts workshops with 20 UASC in Bogovada AC, Vodovodska Shelter and JRS Integration House. Sigma Plus' [online platform for learning Serbian language](#) continued to support 25 learners. Partners Indigo and Sigma Plus organised 107 group activities (recreational, educational and PSS) with children and parents in five RTCs in the south and the east of the country.



Asylum-seeker in Bosilegrad RTC using online platform to learn Serbian language, ©Sigma plus, July 2020

UNHCR delivered contactless thermometers and oximeters to Banja Koviljača AC and Sombor, Subotica and Kikinda RTCs, in addition to 18 contactless thermometers delivered to Serbian Commissariat for Refugees and Migration (SCRM) in the previous period and delivered 2,200 light quilts donated by IKEA to the SCRM. The value of UNHCR Covid-19 response procurements reached almost 200,000 USD.

On 8 July, 30 refugee families from Croatia and BiH received keys of the apartments built under the **Regional Housing Programme (RHP)** Sub-project SRB5 in Sremska Mitrovica. Due to epidemiological measures, the event was attended by the SCRM and Sremska Mitrovica Deputy Mayor only.

Partner A11 Initiative supported 45 internally displaced persons (IDP) in accessing documents and services and asked the authorities for proper due notice and alternative solutions for 70 families (IDP, Roma and refugees) living in Vijadukt settlement in Rakovica near Belgrade who are under threat of forced eviction due to construction of a major road network.

Partner Praxis secured nationality confirmation for 12 persons at risk of **statelessness**, obtained 15 personal documents and two ID cards. Twenty-two procedures of birth registration/acquisition of citizenship were successfully completed and 16 initiated. Praxis also identified 11 new cases requiring free legal assistance.

Partners CRPC, IDEAS and DRC issued a [public statement](#) against violence towards refugees and migrants, following appearance of video in which truck drivers beat and verbally abuse UASC on board the truck trailer.

UNHCR Serbia published a human story [How to End Statelessness](#), and compiled and produced the [Serbia Site Profiles July 2020](#).

UNHCR Serbia is grateful for the support of:

Canada | Czech Republic | Denmark | France | Germany | Netherlands | Norway | Private donors Australia | Private donors Japan | Private donors Republic of Korea | Private donors Spain | Republic of Korea | Russian Federation | Serbia | Sweden | Switzerland | United Kingdom | United States of America

With the support of the following organisations and private sector partners:

IKEA SEE, UniCredit Bank, Unilever