

Republic of Serbia

February 2021

Serbia hosts **26,000** refugees (including refugees from former Yugoslavia and those who have arrived since the onset of European refugee situation in 2015 and were granted international protection in Serbia), **197,000** IDPs and some **2,100** persons at risk of statelessness.

Persons in need of international protection amongst arriving third country nationals are supported in requesting and being granted asylum and in local integration. Most displaced from the region have found solutions, while cases and threat of statelessness have been reduced.

UNHCR continues to support the Government in strengthening the national asylum system to secure institutional protection and sustainable solutions.

POPULATION OF CONCERN

Refugees	26,000
Asylum-seekers	124
Internally displaced people	196,995
Stateless people	2,139
Others of concern	6,509

TOP THREE COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN

Refugees		Asylum-seekers	
Croatia	17,670	Iran	27
BiH	8,124	Somalia	17
Libya	45	Burundi	17

Data source: UNHCR 2020 Annual Statistical Report

COVID-19 PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

Advocacy: UNHCR has successfully advocated for effective inclusion of refugees and asylum-seekers, both privately accommodated and those in governmental centres, in the national vaccination scheme.

Inclusion of persons of concern: As per National Vaccination Plan, refugees and migrants are included in phase 3 of the Plan for 2021.

Communication with Communities: In cooperation with Serbian Commissariat for Refugees and Migration (SCRM), UNHCR facilitated the identification of asylum-seekers and vulnerable individuals in governmental centres to be prioritized for vaccination. UNHCR supported refugees in private accommodation to register their interest in vaccination via eGovernment portal and is following up on individual cases.

Health: UNHCR's partner Danish Refugee Council (DRC) organizes (reproductive) health promotion workshops in asylum centres, including promotion of protective measures against COVID-19. UNHCR has been meeting the *ad hoc* needs of the SCRM in PPEs and medication.

[More info](#)

HIGHLIGHTS

5,453

Newly registered individuals in Jan-Feb 2021

Over 1,200

Counselled by UNHCR and partners on asylum system/procedure in Jan-Feb 2021

32

Applications for asylum in Serbia submitted in Jan-Feb 2021

Education

In 2017, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology Development issued Guidance for enrollment of refugee/asylum-seeking children into primary and secondary schools, making allowances for the *sans papiers* and children without status. Despite the pandemic, all refugee and asylum-seeking children are included in primary education and supported in accessing online learning during COVID-19 lockdowns.



Roma Youth for Roma Community during the COVID-19 pandemic

Roma UN Volunteers helped their communities to overcome the challenges of COVID-19 in Serbia.

Read more [here](#)

Key Priorities

- **Protection outreach:** Data collection focuses on facilitating outreach and identification of protection cases for referral to specialised agencies, whilst informing evidence-based protection interventions.
- **Access to territory:** Activities aimed at strengthening capacities of national authorities for protection-sensitive migration management, focusing on ensuring access to territory, in line with international standards, at green borders, international airports and in the centres.
- **Asylum procedures:** Monitoring asylum procedures and implementation of the Quality Initiative in Serbia, including enhanced use of country of origin information (COI), ensuring gender-sensitive and child-sensitive asylum procedures and provision of free legal aid.
- **Solutions:** Advocating for the realization of Serbia's solutions-related pledges at the 2019 Global Refugee Forum. Exploring housing solutions for refugees and asylum-seekers.
- **Resettlement and Complementary Pathways:** Advocacy with concerned EU countries for the establishment of safe and legal pathways, including family reunification, labour schemes, education opportunities and humanitarian admission schemes.
- **Integration:** Support to integration of persons granted international protection through temporary, direct support, cash-based interventions, livelihoods, language classes, etc., in cooperation with the private sector and civil society organizations.
- **Community Empowerment and Self-Reliance:** Promoting better use of human potential of refugees through their inclusion at local level and stronger exposure to available opportunities.
- **Promoting social cohesion:** Facilitating connections of persons of concern with the local communities through joint social activities, integration in primary and secondary education, linkages to skills, vocational training and local employment.
- **Capacity building:** Judicial engagement and identification of strategic litigation cases, as well as capacity development of the judiciary to interpret and apply relevant international legal principles (*non-refoulement*, access to territory, non-penalization for irregular entry, etc.).

Working with Partners

- UNHCR Serbia enjoys close cooperation with the SCRM, the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs, of Internal Affairs, of Public Administration and Local Self-Government, as well as with local authorities. Partnership agreements are in place with 12 implementing NGO partners and a number of academic institutions.
- **External Engagement:** UNHCR acts as a catalyst of changes and advancement of the asylum system, supporting the national authorities, synergizing with vibrant civil society partners, including academia and other actors, donors, international stakeholders, private sector and refugees themselves.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)



- Close collaboration with the (non-) governmental, UN and development partners, the IFIs and other stakeholders to secure the inclusion and improvement of the situation of persons of concern in the national implementation of **SDG**, COVID-19 prevention, **response** and recovery plans, the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (SDCF) for Serbia, and other developmental processes.

Statelessness

- Serbia is party to 1954 and 1961 Statelessness Conventions and other relevant international instruments.
- Serbia recognizes the status of a 'stateless' person, which entails the right to work, education, social security and a travel document, as well as protection against discrimination. However, a clear and accessible statelessness determination procedure is yet to be achieved.

UNHCR Presence in Serbia

Staff:

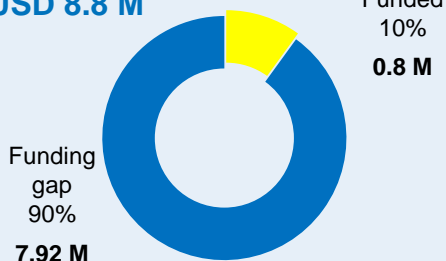
37 National Staff
 3 International Staff
 8 Affiliate Staff

Offices:

1 Country Office in Belgrade
 1 Field Unit in Preševo

Financial information (23 Feb 2021)

USD 8.8 M



UNHCR is grateful to the major donors of unearmarked contributions* to the 2021 global programmes (USD 924,237 as of 23 February):

Norway 80 M | Sweden 66.9 M | Netherlands 36.1 M | Denmark 34.6 M | Germany 22.1 M | Switzerland 16.4 M | Ireland 12.5 M | Belgium 11.9 M

*Unearmarked contributions allow UNHCR for critical flexibility in how best to reach populations of concern who are in the greatest need and at the greatest risk. Above are donors of USD 10 million or more.