

# Greece

**2,550 people arrived by sea and 1,500 by land this month.** Arrivals this year are double those of 2017. The Government is increasing accommodation for asylum-seekers in camps but the needs

surpass these efforts. Island centres remain extremely overcrowded in Lesbos, Chios and Samos where many children, pregnant women and other vulnerable people live in difficult conditions and makeshift shelter.

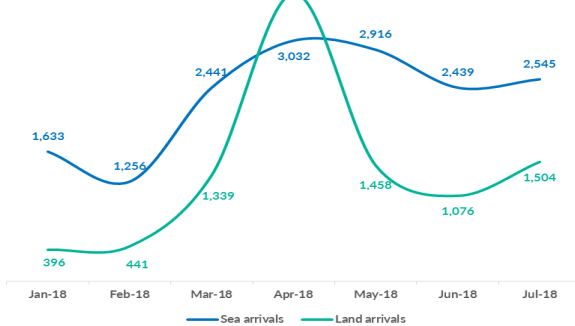
The situation has worsened in some mainland sites. Wildfires in Athens left many dead and homeless. Refugee and migrant communities volunteered their help to the fire victims.

## REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS IN GREECE\*

**61,000**

**16,100** on the islands and **44,800** in the mainland

### Arrivals in 2018



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

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

**52,000**

eligible asylum-seekers and refugees this month, and 80,300 since April 2017 received **cash assistance**.

**1,000**

people this month, and 29,300 since June 2016 from the islands **transferred** to the mainland with UNHCR support.

**21,300**

people this month, and 50,200 since November 2015 have benefitted from UNHCR's **accommodation in apartments**.

## UNHCR PRESENCE

### Staff:

343 National Staff

43 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



Natasha (R), a transgender woman from Pakistan, is the first refugee in Greece to have changed her name and gender on her legal documents under a court ruling in Thessaloniki based on a recent Greek law on the legal recognition of gender identity.

## 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, 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, the Government will be taking over the schemes. UNHCR works closely with staff from State agencies and helps build their expertise 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. The host population benefits as well from the 4,198 apartments that the programme rents in 21 cities across Greece. UNHCR had 25,406 places in apartments in July.
- UNHCR gave cash in the form of pre-paid cards to 51,945 asylum-seekers and refugees in July. Cash preserves refugees' dignity and allows them to choose what they need most. Cash is spent on goods and services, and so it also contributes to the local community. In July, over 5 million euros in cash assistance will be re-injected into the local economy across Greece.

### Protection

- On the islands, the situation has worsened in the Reception and Identification Centres (RICs) of Lesbos, Chios and Samos where three times more people live than the available capacity. Water and electricity cuts, high temperatures and the few shaded areas make matters worse in the overcrowded RICs.
- UNHCR supports the Ministry of Migration Policy transfer asylum-seekers from the islands to continue their asylum procedure in the mainland. This helps ease overcrowding on islands' Reception and Identification Centres (RICs). The shortage of accommodation however has limited the transfers to 1,039 people this month, from Lesbos (524), Samos (203), Chios (197), Kos (78) and Leros (37), while over 4,000 people remained on the islands waiting for shelter to become available in the mainland.
- As of July, RIS identifies and informs people eligible to depart and coordinates their transfer with authorities in Athens. UNHCR will implement the logistical aspects of the transfers until September 2018. The transfers will then be implemented by the Reception and Identification Service (RIS). UNHCR teams worked side-by-side with RIS staff to prepare for the handover.
- The shortage of accommodation is also creating overcrowding in some mainland sites. The Government is increasing accommodation in the existing camps, and by opening

new ones. To assist these efforts, UNHCR offered shelter items that could host 2,800 people. However, work remains to ensure that new camps have sufficient medical and social support for the residents.

- In Evros, UNHCR's protection team helps new arrivals at Fylakio, RIC, focusing on the proper identification and referral of asylum-seekers, unaccompanied children and those with specific needs.
- UNHCR through its partners have helped over 6,580 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 510 people were also assisted with legal aid at the appeal stage of the asylum procedure through UNHCR's 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 13,800 instances.
- UNHCR with partners in Greece helped over 900 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 works to build the expertise of staff in the municipal Migration Integration Centres (KEM) to better help the asylum-seekers and refugees who visit them. This month, UNHCR trained staff in Athens on the legal framework, on recognizing specific needs so as to help, and on supporting refugees towards integration.
- 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 3,510 unaccompanied children in Greece but only 1,191 places in shelters and SIL apartments (Source: EKKA, as of 15 July). As a result, many children spend lengthy periods in protective custody, in the RICs on the islands and Evros waiting for a place in age-appropriate shelters, while others stay in informal housing or risk homelessness.
- Living conditions for unaccompanied and separated children remain alarming especially on Lesbos where children often share shelter with adults, on Samos where the designated area remains without security, and on Evros where there is limited support and services for children at the RIC.
- On the islands and the land-border, UNHCR helps the authorities protect children from risk through child-friendly spaces, informal education as well as with 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 485 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), now in its pilot phase in Crete, where EKKA guardians and dedicated teams support children over 16 years old.
- 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, 20 children have departed from Greece to the UK within the framework of the Dubs Scheme, with another seven to depart shortly. UNHCR has worked with the authorities to develop panels which identify children eligible to relocate under the scheme, by considering their needs and best interest.

### **Prevention and Response to Sexual and Gender-based Violence**

- Sexual harassment and violence, including against men and boys, constitutes 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 exacerbates feelings of unsafety among the refugee population. Accessing hygiene facilities and uncoordinated shelter allocation arrangements 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, the limited services in some of the RICs mean that 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 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 ensure that all refugee children go to school.
- Over 3,200 children living in UNHCR's accommodation attended school in 2017 – 2018 together with Greek nationals. In addition, the majority of students in primary and secondary education learned Greek as a foreign language in special reception classes called Zones of Educational Priority (ZEP). Children living in sites mostly attended afternoon classes that aimed to prepare their entry in State schools.
- On the islands, UNHCR supports non-formal education, as formal education is not yet available for most children.

### **Health**

- UNHCR works with the Ministry of Health, KEELPNO and partners to help refugees and asylum-seekers access healthcare.

- The limited public mental health institutions in Greece are of particular concern. UNHCR with partners work on ways to link those affected by mental health conditions with public institutions.
- In Attika, UNHCR collaborates with the Association for Regional Development and Mental Health, EPAPSY, on a pilot project to provide support to 40 people with mental health conditions in UNHCR apartments and short hospitalization for those requiring intensive care.
- UNHCR funds primary and psychosocial support services in Lesvos and mental health services in Attika. There psychiatrists and psychologists provide services at the polyclinic of the municipality of Athens.
- Across the islands, the low number of staff under the Ministry of Health, in particular doctors and cultural mediators, narrows the provision of medical and psychosocial services both at the RICs and local hospitals. This situation further delays the vulnerability assessment which is an integral part of the asylum procedure and increases the risk of vulnerable people going unnoticed.

### Durable Solutions

- As of July 2018, 6,760 had received refugee status or subsidiary protection in Greece, and 10,357 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 basic 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 key 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 July 2018, some 4,700 beneficiaries of international and subsidiary protection were accommodated in UNHCR's apartments, and 7,500 received cash assistance.
- Of those in UNHCR's accommodation, 90% have an AMKA social security number, 52% have an AFM tax number, and 18% are registered with OAED agency for programmes and other assistance to help them find work. Additionally, 73% of children residing in accommodation were enrolled in schools (as of 31 July 2018).

### Relocation and Returns

- The relocation programme of asylum-seekers from Greece to other EU Member States concluded in September 2017. In total 22,000 people departed.
- This month, 23 people returned from Greece to Turkey in the framework of the E.U. - Turkey Statement, with 1,673 people in total since 20 March 2016.

### Shelter

- UNHCR with partners and in coordination with the Municipality of Lesvos, support the site management of Kara Tepe and transit site in Skala Sikamineas providing a set of protection and basic assistance services.

### Logistics

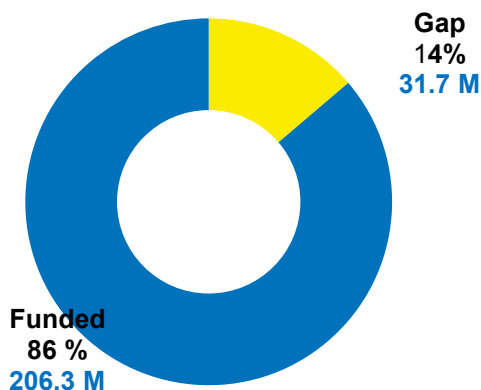
- As many of the sites in the mainland are remote from services and public transportation UNHCR has facilitated people's access to the Asylum Service or other services by providing transportation to over 2,600 people around Greece in May.

### Partners

In July, UNHCR worked through 33 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, the Association for Regional Development and Mental Health (EPAPSY) and Kinoniko EKAV; on Prevention and Response to SGBV with Diotima; 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; 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.

### FUNDING (AS OF 31 JULY 2018)

**USD 239.3 M** requested for the Greece Operation



### Donors

#### Special thanks to the major donors of unrestricted and regional funds in 2018

Sweden 98.2 M | Norway 42.5 M | Netherlands 39.1 M | Private donors Spain 37.8 M | United Kingdom 31.7 M | Denmark 25.5 M | Private donors Republic of Korea 19 M | Switzerland 15.2 M | France 14 M | Italy 11.2 M | Private donors Japan 11.1 M | Private donors Italy 10.2 M



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

European Union 195 M | Private donors Switzerland 0.5 M | Fondation BNP Paribas 0.3 M

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