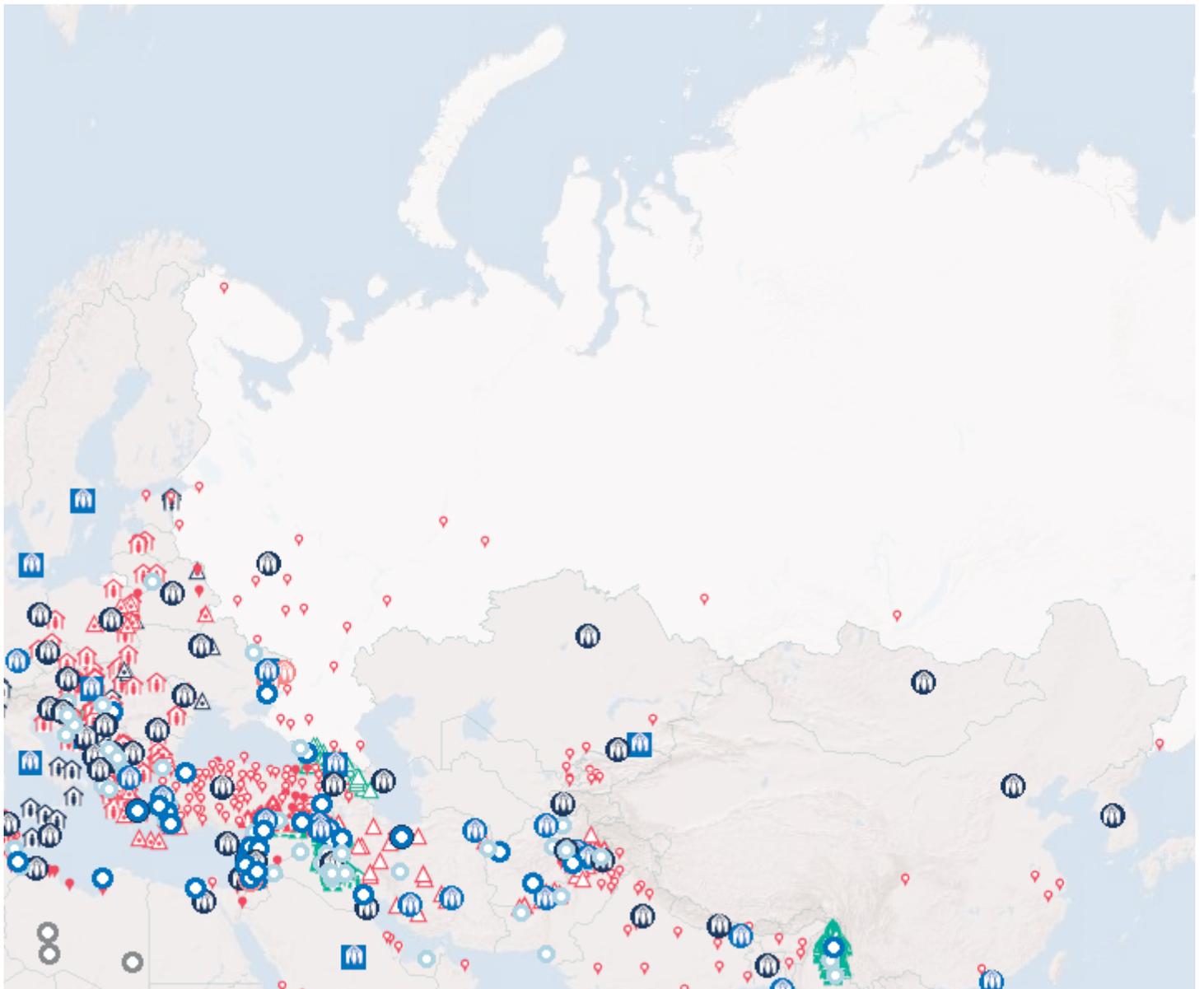


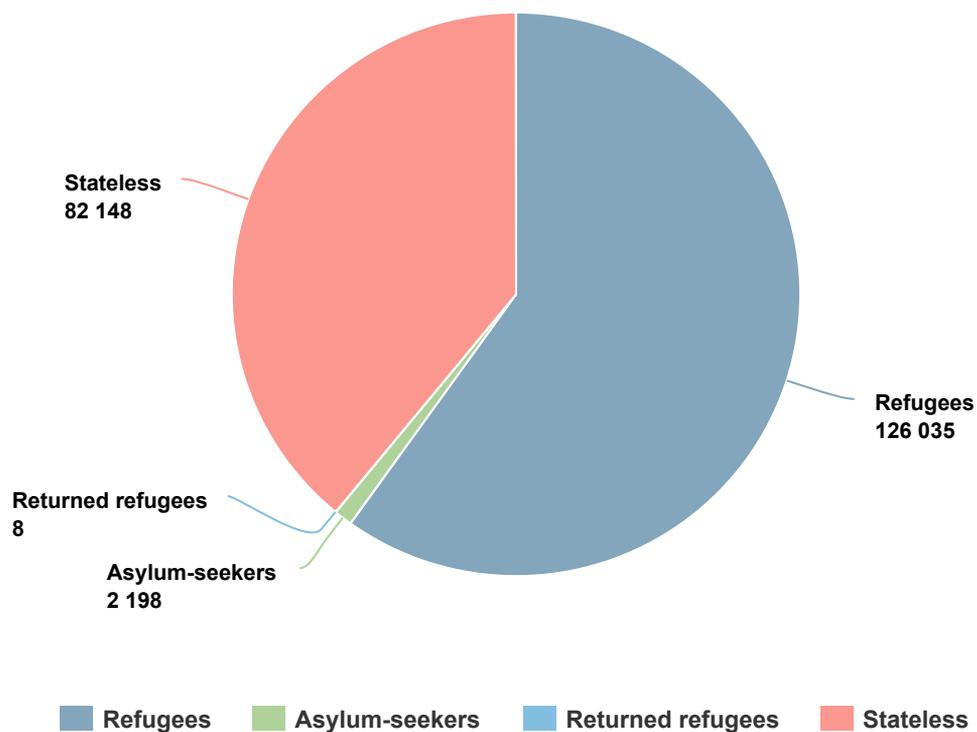
Operation: Russian Federation



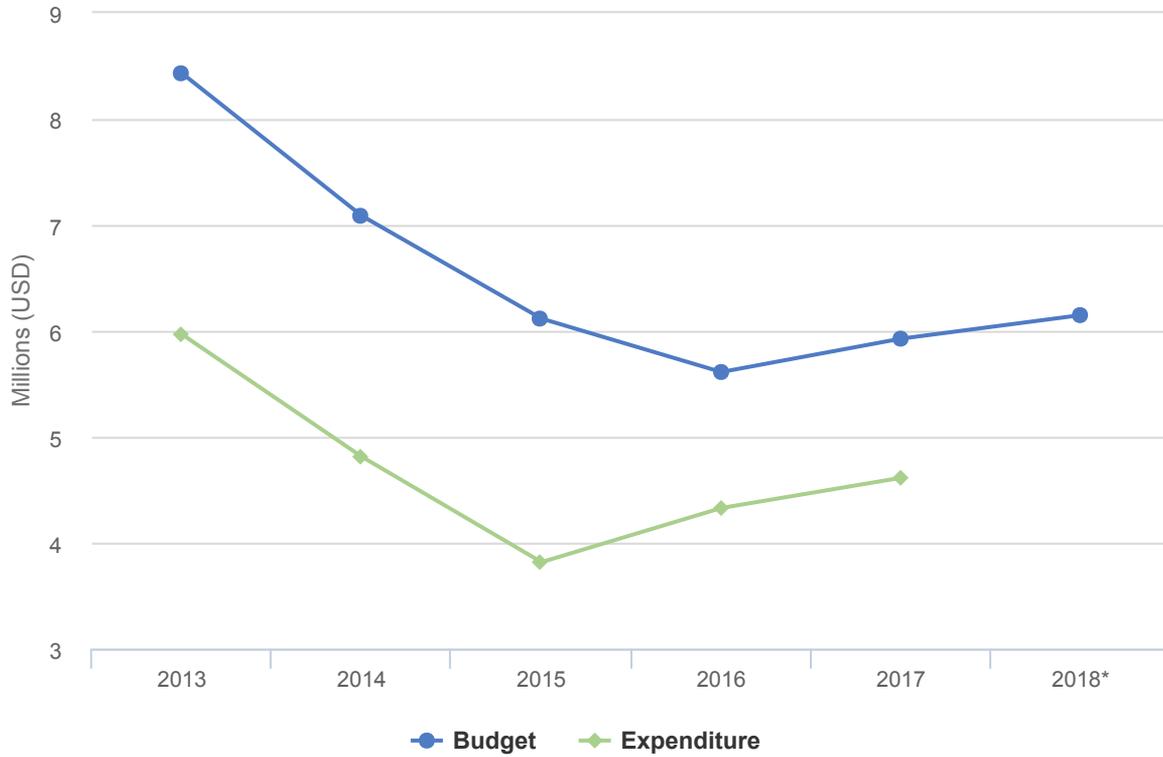
People of Concern

DECREASE IN
35 % 2017

| | |
|-------------|---------|
| 2017 | 210,389 |
| 2016 | 322,856 |
| 2015 | 418,411 |



Budgets and Expenditure for Russian Federation



Operational context

In 2017, UNHCR continued to operate in a complex environment in the Russian Federation. Transfer of the functions from the Federal Migration Service (FMS) to the Ministry of the Interior along with Russia's more restrictive migration policies were the critical changes that affected the situation of UNHCR's people of concern. National and regional security has shaped strongly all legislation and policy-making, including regional such as the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO).

The Government continued to lead and manage the operational response for refugees and asylum-seekers from Ukraine.

Non-Ukrainian asylum-seekers experienced administrative penalties including initiation of expulsion procedures instead of registering asylum claims; longer waiting periods; absence of identity cards and documents confirming their legal stay in Russia; and hampered access to the asylum procedure and public services.

UNHCR and its partners provided legal support to regularize the status of stateless persons; worked with the Ministry of Interior and partners to map and assist stateless persons in detention; and implemented several awareness-raising activities. The 2012 amendment to the Citizenship Law extended the deadline for simplified naturalization for certain categories of stateless persons from the former Soviet Union until 1 January 2020.

Population trends

The Russian Federation hosted some 126,000 registered refugees, including 123,600 Ukrainians, 1,130 Syrians and some 660 Afghans. Approximately 800,000 Ukrainians enjoyed other forms of legal stay.

Since January 2014, close to 449,500 Ukrainians have applied for temporary asylum in the Russian Federation. In 2017, some 9,680 Ukrainians received temporary asylum.

At the end of 2017, an estimated 82,000 stateless persons were living in the Russian Federation.

Key achievements

- UNHCR strengthened litigation of individual cases in order to prevent *refoulement*. The Office implemented a number of capacity-building initiatives for Ombudsmen's Offices and NGOs to strengthen the protection of refugees and stateless persons.
- UNHCR increased its presence in refugee communities, with the aim of mapping needs and capacities, as well as raising awareness of UNHCR's and partners' activities. This was done through engaging with communities and partners, regular participatory assessments and publication of a simplified brochure presenting the available assistance to people of concern.
- In order to increase opportunities for local integration of people of concern, UNHCR continued supporting two community centres in the Moscow region for Syrian refugees, as well as a refugee reception centre in Moscow and an integration centre in Saint Petersburg for other nationalities. Among a variety of activities, the centres provide Russian language classes and support in job search. In 2017, courses in sewing, hair-dressing and manicure were organised in Moscow and Saint Petersburg.

Unmet needs

- Limited outreach capacity (both financial and geographical) as well as the transfer of functions to the Ministry of Interior, due to which UNHCR will have to visit and negotiate with every region hosting people of concern, hampered UNHCR's ability to map out and assist more thoroughly the people of concern in the Russian Federation.

- UNHCR was only able to cover 20, out of 38, counselling points in Russia run by the NGO Memorial. With decreased funding, Memorial is losing some of the counselling points, which results in decreasing legal support to people of concern and less information available on the asylum situation in the country.
 - With the overall economic decline, the number of refugees approaching UNHCR for assistance increased in 2017. Most of them had to rent one room for 5-10 people in substandard living conditions, resulting in poor hygiene and leading to further deterioration of health among the population. However, UNHCR's financial and health assistance was still very limited to only extreme vulnerable cases.
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