

Cyprus

February 2021

Presence: UNHCR has been present in Cyprus since 1974. In 2000, the Republic of Cyprus adopted its first refugee legislation and asylum procedures, and took over from UNHCR the responsibility for asylum adjudication in 2002.

Relief assistance: UNHCR donated material items for needs arising at the reception centres due to overpopulation, and advocated for safe zones for women and children and for the transfer of UASC to more appropriate housing.

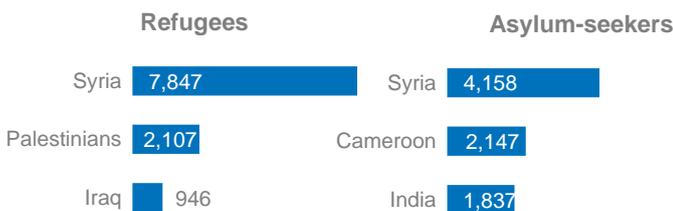
UNHCR counters negative **public perceptions** with interviews, statements, social media depicting refugees' positive contributions, and supporting the promotion of human rights and social inclusion.

POPULATION OF CONCERN

Refugees	12,967*
Asylum-seekers	19,607
Persons Under UNHCR's Mandate in the northern part of Cyprus	80
Persons in the British Sovereign Base Areas	16

*Of these, some 10,670 hold Subsidiary Protection.

TOP THREE COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN



The top ten countries of origin of new asylum-seekers in Cyprus from Jan - July 2020 are Syria, India, Cameroon, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Iran, Democratic Rep. of Congo, Nepal, Nigeria & Egypt.

Data source: UNHCR 2020 Mid-Year Statistical report and UNHCR [data finder platform](#)

COVID-19 PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

Communication with Communities: UNHCR and partners have become more accessible to persons of concern through feedback and complaints mechanisms, Refugee Outreach Volunteers have been instrumental. The mechanisms have been effective in monitoring pushbacks in 2020 and enabled the prevention of refoulement.

Advocacy: UNHCR advocated for access to territory and asylum procedures and improving conditions at the first reception centre, focusing on the creation of safe spaces for women and children; transfer of unaccompanied or separated children to adequate facilities; improvement of hygiene conditions and prevention of COVID-19 among residents.

Inclusion: UNHCR has established collaboration with the PIO to translate COVID-19 information into languages of populations of concern; and make it widely available online, including National Vaccination Plan information.

Health: UNHCR successfully advocated for the inclusion of persons of concern in the National Vaccination Plan.

HIGHLIGHTS

Cash assistance

The Council of Ministers adopted a decision to replace coupons with cash assistance for asylum seekers, realizing one of UNHCR's long-term goals.

Vulnerability assessment

A vulnerability tool for assessing the specific needs of asylum seekers at the first reception centre was finalized in line with UNHCR's recommendations and implemented by the Asylum Service, UNHCR and EASO.

Integration

In UNHCR 2nd Annual Integration Conference 150 stakeholders came together to tackle the persistent policy gaps and the new challenges faced by refugees.

Access to tertiary education

UNHCR has signed MOUs with universities to increase the educational prospects for young refugees in Cyprus.



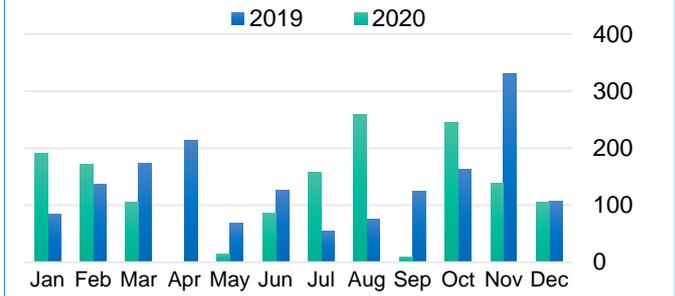
Thoughtful and heart-warming cartoon from young Cypriot artist a winner in UNHCR's Youth with Refugees Art Contest

The UNHCR Country Office in Cyprus was delighted that out of 2,000 entries from 100 countries, one of the top seven winners in UNHCR's Youth with Refugees Art Contest was Maria Iliia from Limassol, Cyprus.

Key Priorities

- **Monitoring and promoting** respect for refugee rights and the standards of treatment of asylum-seekers, particularly as regards access to asylum procedures, reception conditions and detention.
- **Influencing legislation** affecting refugees and asylum-seekers by providing expert advice and comments on relevant draft laws to ensure compliance with international and EU standards.
- **Providing technical assistance**, legal advice and other forms of support to assist the authorities to further strengthen their refugee status determination procedures and ensure quality decision-making.
- **Monitoring and advocacy** to ensure that UASC have effective access to the national child protection system with respect to accurate and timely identification; registration and documentation; guardianship and legal representation; adequate care and supervision; tracing and family reunification by way of best interest determination.
- **Training of key stakeholders** from the government and civil society on basic protection issues, including refugee rights, reception conditions for asylum-seekers, durable solutions and child protection.
- **Integration:** Promoting good practices in relation to policies and measures that support the effective integration of refugees into the social, economic and cultural fabric of Cypriot society, including advocacy for naturalization, long-term residence permits and family reunification.
- **Promoting accession** to the UN statelessness conventions.
- **Strengthening and broadening public information** through education and awareness-raising activities, working with the media, campaigns, seminars, events and constituency-building.
- **Strengthening partnerships with NGOs** and other civil society actors involved in refugee protection.

MONTHLY SEA ARRIVALS TO CYPRUS



Source and more information: [UNHCR Data Portal](#)

Working with Partners

- **The Government of Cyprus** is UNHCR's key partner in its mission to ensure the protection of refugees and asylum-seekers in accordance with EU and international standards. UNHCR co-operates with other bodies including relevant Parliamentary committees, Ombudsman, Office of the Child Commissioner, diplomatic missions and the media.
- **NGOs and civil society:** UNHCR has forged links across civil society. Currently, UNHCR has a funding-based partnership agreement with two NGOs.

Statelessness

- Cyprus has not acceded to the 1954 and 1961 UN Conventions on statelessness. Provisions in the Refugee Law, which allowed for the granting of humanitarian status to stateless persons in need of protection but who were falling outside the scope of the refugee definition, have since 2014 been abolished, rendering stateless persons without any means of protection. Most resort to the asylum procedures, irrespective of having an asylum claim.

UNHCR Presence in Cyprus

Staff:

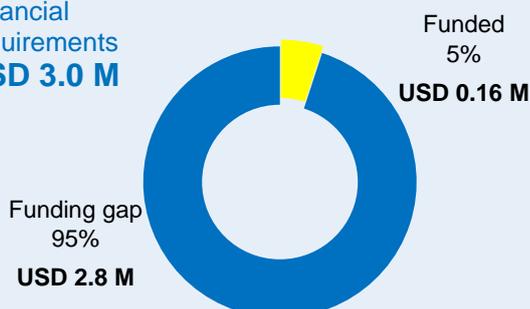
1 International Staff
 10 National Staff
 3 Affiliate Staff (UNOPS)

Offices:

1 Country Office in Nicosia

Financial information (28 February 2021)

Financial requirements
USD 3.0 M



UNHCR is grateful to the major donors of unearmarked contributions* to the 2021 global programmes (USD, as of 28 February 2021):

Norway 80 M | Sweden 66.9 M | Netherlands 36.1 M | Denmark 34.6 M | Germany 22.1 M | Switzerland 16.4 M | Private donors Spain 13.3 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.