

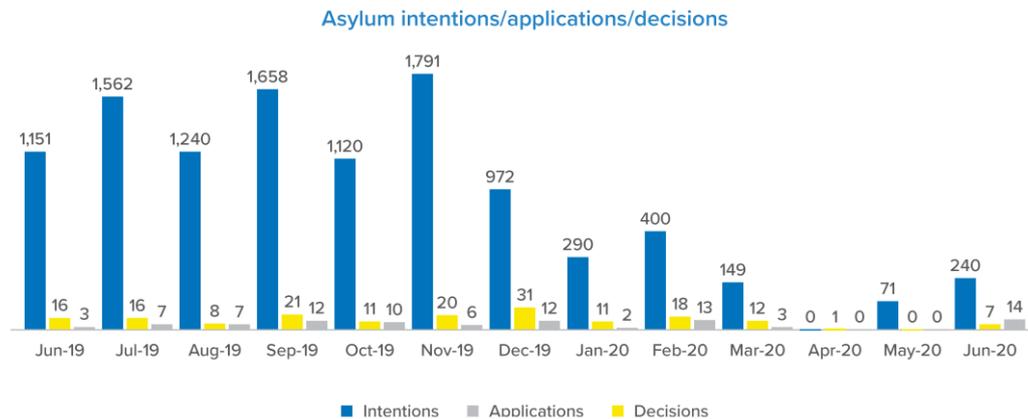
SERBIA MONTHLY UPDATE

UNHCR and partners informed and counselled over 1,600 foreigners on access to **asylum**, health care and other rights and services and supported the **integration** of 115 asylum seekers and refugees. UNHCR partners also supported authorities with over 1,000 interpretation and cultural mediation services.

No refugee or asylum seeker tested positive for COVID-19 infection. UNHCR and its eleven partners remained fully operational, carefully calibrating office and field presence in line with infection-prevention protocols, while continuing comprehensive **risk-communication** in all languages of refugees and asylum seekers, online, on phone and in person.

The Asylum Office of the Ministry of Interior resumed activities. It conducted three refugee status determination interviews, **granted asylum** to one applicant and subsidiary protection to four, rejected six claims and suspended procedures in ten. Five new asylum seekers provided UNHCR project lawyers with powers of attorney to represent them in substantive asylum procedures.

UNHCR and partners turned to the public to mark **World Refugee Day**. Major TV stations and dailies featured refugee stories, interviews, and UNHCR's [Global Trends Report](#). Global and national [video clips](#) were broadcast on social media and TV, as well as on public squares in Belgrade and Nis. Partner INDIGO organised World Refugee Day activities with women and children in Bujanovac, Preševo and Vranje Reception Centres and partner Psychosocial Innovation Network (PIN) a gathering of refugee teachers and local students. Partner Belgrade Centre for Human Rights (BCHR) brought refugee and local youth together to form a buddy system which conducted a first joint workshop on equality, gender and GBV.



The number of foreigners that **newly arrived** in Serbia and were profiled by UNHCR **more than tripled** to 1,973. 88% entered from North Macedonia and 10% from Albania.

Occupancy of governmental Asylum (AC), Reception (RC) and Transit Centres (TC) shrank from 5,802 at the beginning to 5,121 at the end of the month. Over **66%** of residents originated from so-called refugee producing countries and would likely be recognised as **in need of international protection** once subject to fair and efficient asylum procedures. At end June, residents comprised 4,383 adult men, 278 adult women and 521 children, including 167 unaccompanied or separated children (UASC). 1,980 were citizens of Afghanistan, 884 of Syria, 728 of Bangladesh, 482 of Pakistan, 285 of Iran, 206 of Iraq, and 556 of 39 other countries. Authorities closed for renovation the RCs of Pirot and Bujanovac, transferring their residents to the RCs of Preševo, Divljana or Vranje. Six TCs in Vojvodina, accommodating unregistered migrant men, remained overcrowded.

The number of asylum seekers and migrants observed outside centres rose from 502 at the beginning to 740 at the end of the month. The number of recorded **collective expulsions** from neighbouring countries **tripled** to 2,208: 1,132 from Romania, 579 from Hungary, 253 from Croatia and 156 from Bosnia and Herzegovina. Many victims alleged denial of access to asylum procedures or mistreatment by officials of these countries.

UNHCR kept regular contact with 115 **refugees** and asylum-seekers in **private accommodation**, of whom 84 qualified for financial support, including 38 who had lost their income due to the COVID-19 situation. Resuming field visits to all centres and other sites, partners BCHR and the Humanitarian Centre for Integration and Tolerance (HCIT) provided free legal aid to 332 asylum seekers or refugees. BCHR also assisted 22 to obtain ID cards, ten ENF and seven work permits.

As public schools remained closed, cultural mediators of partner Crisis Response and Policy Centre (CRPC) supported the home **schooling** of five refugee children in private accommodation and of 70 UASC in five specialised UASC homes. CRPC started **Serbian language classes** for UASC in Bogovađa AC, while partner Sigma Plus continued teaching Serbian in RCs and partner Danish Refugee Council (DRC) in Banja Koviljača AC. Partner PIN supported 169 asylum seekers and refugees with psychological and **integration** services, while partner DRC continued to identify and support survivors of **GBV**.

A video showing violence against UASC by security guards in Bogovađa AC, which UNHCR partners had reported to the police, public prosecutor, and the Ombudsperson in May, was broadcast on social media and TV. On 27 June the Ombudsperson issued a report censuring the AC, the Serbian Commissariat for Refugees and Migration, and the local Centre for Social Work (CSW) for omissions in their work with UASC in Bogovađa including their failure to immediately report these crimes to the police and/or prosecutor's office. Under its MOU with the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veterans and Social Affairs, partner IDEAS visited nine CSW throughout Serbia to strengthen the know-how, capacities and cooperation of all local actors responsible for the care of UASC. Partner Indigo provided 1,448 information, referral, education, recreation or interpretation services, to UASC and other refugee children in South Serbia.

A young refugee from Syria tragically drowned in Ada lake. A small demonstration demanded the removal of migrants from Banja Koviljača. UNHCR project lawyers helped four refugees to file charges related to criminal offenses committed against them, including a privately accommodated refugee family that had been brutally threatened and attacked by a local neighbour. Upon request of BCHR, the Media Council instructed media to remove hate-speech comments against refugees from five portals.



World Refugee Day workshop at Vranje Reception Centre ©UNHCR

With 5,760 towels donated by IKEA South East Europe as well as two steam cleaners, 640 tracksuits, 1,280 T-shirts, 2,560 pieces of underwear, 2,560 pairs of socks and 640 pairs of sneakers for UASC, purchased by UNHCR, targeted **COVID-19 prevention procurements** reached a value of 197,770 USD.

327 households of former refugees received apartments from the **Regional Housing Programme (RHP)** in Novi Sad, Požarevac, Novi Pazar, Svilajnac and Irig. Foundations for the building of another ten apartments were laid in Kraljevo. 4,800 ex-refugee families yet benefitted from RHP housing solutions in Serbia. UNHCR and the OSCE decided to support sustainability monitoring, which shall survey 800 of them.

On visits to 32 Roma settlements, partner Praxis newly identified and provided free legal aid to 43 persons at risk of **statelessness**. Praxis secured nationality confirmation for 21 persons, obtained 21 personal documents, three ID cards, and facilitated the successful conclusion of 24 procedures of birth registration and acquisition of citizenship.

Partner A11 Initiative signed an agreement with the Ombudsman on cooperation in activities of the National Preventive Mechanism and filed a constitutional complaint against the deprivation of liberty of asylum seekers during the COVID-19 lockdown. A11 joined another 51 CSOs [to criticise the failure of Parliament](#) to elect a new **Commissioner for the Protection of Equality** within the legally prescribed timeframe.

UNHCR enjoyed daily inter-agency coordination. Supporting the formulation of a national COVID-19 recovery strategy and plan that leaves no-one behind, UNHCR - in close cooperation with the SCRM - submitted rapid assessments of the **socio-economic impact** of the COVID-19 pandemic on asylum-seekers, refugees, internally displaced and stateless persons in Serbia to the respective Task Force of the UN Country Team and the Public Investment Management Office (PIMO) of the Government.

Special thanks to major donors of unearmarked contributions- 2020¹ | USD

Sweden 76.4 million | Norway 41.4 million | Netherlands 36.1 million | Denmark 34.6 million | United Kingdom 31.7 million | Germany 26.4 million | Switzerland 16.4 million

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Canada 2.3 million

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¹ Contributed without restrictions on its use, unearmarked funding allows UNHCR critical flexibility in how best to reach refugees and other populations of concern who are in the greatest need and at the greatest risk. Where a donor has contributed \$10 million or more, the total amount of the contribution is shown.

² Due to their earmarking at the region or sub-region, or to a related situation or theme, the other softly earmarked contributions listed are those which can potentially be used for Serbia. Where a donor has contributed \$2 million or more, the total amount of the contributions is shown.