

Greece

In January **4,000 people arrived**, more than half of those who arrived last year. They are mostly **families with children** from **Afghanistan and Syria**. **1,850** arrived on the islands and **850** at the land borders.

Perils are grave for refugees and staff working at the islands' reception centres due to **insecurity** and **sub-standard** conditions with **36,200** sharing a space for **5,400**. Among those most exposed to risks

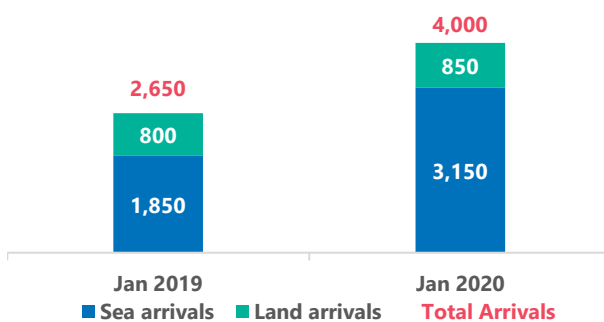
are **unaccompanied children** also due to the **interruptions** in **guardianship**. UNHCR stands ready to support the Government's solutions for the revival of the programme.

REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS IN GREECE*

115,600

74,400 in the mainland and **41,200** on the islands

Arrivals



*UNHCR estimate as of 31 January 2020 of those who arrived and remained in Greece since the 2015 – 2016 flow.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

94,000

eligible asylum-seekers and refugees this month, and **166,600** since April 2017 received **cash assistance**.

21,450

people this month, and **64,600** since January 2015 have benefitted from UNHCR's **accommodation in apartments**.

PEOPLE IN UNHCR'S ESTIA ACCOMMODATION

80% children enrolled in schools

78% have access to healthcare (AMKA or PAAYPA)

60% have tax identification number (AFM)

25% registered with unemployment agency (OAED)

4% have a bank account

UNHCR PRESENCE

Staff:

304 National Staff

31 International Staff

Offices:

1 Country Office in Athens

2 Sub Offices in
Thessaloniki, Lesbos

3 Field Offices in Chios,
Samos, Kos

4 Field Units in Evros,
Ioannina, Leros,
Rhodes



An Afghan asylum-seeker bakes bread in a makeshift ground oven at the informal expansion of Moria reception centre on Lesbos.

Working with Partners

- UNHCR supports the Government of Greece who leads the refugee response, working closely with other United Nations agencies, international and national NGOs, regional and State institutions, municipalities, grassroots organizations, refugee communities and the local society.

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. UNHCR works closely with staff from State agencies for the transition of these programmes to the Greek authorities.
- 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 facilitated and helps the integration of those who will remain in Greece. The host population also benefits from the **4,604 apartments and 8 buildings** that the programme rents in **21 cities and towns** across Greece. UNHCR had **25,700 accommodation places** in January.
- UNHCR gave cash in the form of pre-paid cards to **94,000 asylum-seekers and refugees** in apartments and sites. Cash allows refugees to choose what they need most. It is spent on food, goods and services, and contributes to the local community. In January, more than **9.1 million euro** in cash assistance will eventually be re-injected into the local economy.

Protection

- Housing options and services to cater for the present population are limited countrywide. Relations between the refugee and host community have become tenuous with growing aggressive episodes and tension.
- Living conditions remain dangerous on the islands, with congested spaces, sub-standard sanitation and serious incidents. More police officers, including women, are needed as rampant insecurity is having an adverse impact on the well-being and safety of refugees and staff working in the reception centres. Unaccompanied boys and girls, single women and single-headed families are in particularly high risk.
- On 11 January, a shipwreck occurred with **twelve dead** southwest of Paxoi islands, in the Ionian Sea. UNHCR supported survivors with psychosocial care and accommodation. This was the first shipwreck in the Ionian Sea since 2013.
- Transfers from the islands to the mainland help liberate much-needed space in the reception centres. This month, UNHCR supported **2,100** out of **2,200 organized transfers**. In total, **3,600 people departed** to the mainland.

- UNHCR's team in Evros, at the Greek - Turkish land border helps people who have recently arrived at the Fylakio reception centre. They ensure they are informed and identified properly and that people with specific needs are directed to appropriate services.
- UNHCR helps strengthen the national system and expertise by seconding **66 experts** to the various State agencies to bolster their response and organizing trainings for Governmental staff.
- UNHCR supports the Asylum Service with experts who advise the Asylum Service caseworkers upon request on how to conduct interviews, draft decisions on asylum applications and provide on-the-job training. UNHCR assisted in **1,067 instances in 2020, and 49,212 since 2016**. This work has multiplying benefits beyond these instances promoting high quality in asylum processing and ensuring the integrity of the procedure.
- From the beginning of 2020, UNHCR and its partners have helped over **2,300 asylum-seekers and beneficiaries of international protection** with counselling and legal representation in order to prepare and support their cases, such as for family reunification procedures.
- UNHCR [HELP website](#) answers questions in five languages on [how to apply for asylum](#), on their [rights and obligations](#), and on accessing services when [living in Greece](#).

Child Protection

- Living conditions for the **5,500 children** who arrived alone in Greece are critical as only **one in five** has a place in an appropriate shelter ([EKKA data](#) as of January).
- UNHCR is concerned that hundreds of unaccompanied children in Greece – already experiencing hardship – will be exposed to greater risks after a guardianship programme, supported by UNHCR with the Ministry of Labour and NGO METAdrasi, ended at the start of this year but has not been replaced yet by a planned Governmental scheme.
- UNHCR identifies vulnerable children and supports them with legal aid and psychosocial support through partners and boosts the response of the Government with expertise, trainings and advice.
- UNHCR's partner METAdrasi safely moved **40 unaccompanied children** from reception centres to temporary shelters on the mainland.
- UNHCR provides places in supported independent living apartments for **44 unaccompanied children** over 16 years old, mentoring and empowering them to become self-reliant and live on their own. For younger children, UNHCR works with foster families to cater to the needs of **30 unaccompanied or separated children**.

Prevention and Response to Sexual and Gender-based Violence

- Lack of privacy, inadequate lighting and long distance to toilets and showers foster risks of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in the sites. In urban areas, homeless SGBV survivors have increased in the last six months based on a [report](#) of UNHCR's partner Diotima. **One out of three survivors** report to have been raped

while being homeless, while attempting to find safety or in Greece. They are often single mothers, have been tortured or have serious medical problems.

- UNHCR works to prevent and respond to SGBV in urban areas as well as some field locations and islands to identify [survivors](#), including men and LGBTI persons, as well as people at risk, offering case management, legal information, counselling and psychosocial and medical attention through partners. UNHCR refers survivors and those at high risk of sexual exploitation to State services and shelters or accommodation in apartments where they can get expert help.
- UNHCR supports the authorities in strengthening the national reporting mechanism on trafficking, especially on the islands where the situation is more challenging.

Education

- UNHCR with UNICEF and other actors support the [Ministry of Education](#) (MoE) to include and prepare refugee boys and girls for public school. In the current school year, **88% of recognised refugee children in ESTIA** accommodation are enrolled into public schools alongside their Greek peers. UNHCR estimates that **10,850 school-aged children** (5-17) are on the Aegean islands, but less than **three per cent** attend school.
- In the absence of official classes, UNHCR works to bridge the gap in the education of children on the islands through six non-formal learning centres, as well as legal and psychosocial support to children at risk. In Athens, children and youth follow an innovative approach that offers opportunities for education and life skills-building.
- UNHCR joins forces with teachers and students to increase awareness about forced displacement and human rights through [experiential learning](#) techniques. In January, more than **80 teachers** were trained on the use of interactive tools that help promote tolerance and openness for the integration of refugee students in schools.

Health

- UNHCR works with the [Ministry of Health](#), the [National Public Health Organization](#) (EODY) and partners to help refugees and asylum-seekers access healthcare, also in coordination with the [World Health Organization](#).
- UNHCR supports primary healthcare and psychosocial support services in Lesvos and mental health services in Attika and Thessaloniki. UNHCR works with experts to train and build the skills of non-specialist refugees to offer basic psychosocial support and empower vulnerable refugees, including those with mental health conditions.

Durable Solutions

- Since 2013, **51,600** people acquired **refugee or subsidiary protection** in Greece, of which **17,350** in December ([Asylum Service](#) data as of December). In January, **14,900 recognised** refugees benefitted from cash assistance and **6,450 beneficiaries of international protection status** were accommodated in UNHCR's apartments.
- UNHCR supports the Government in promoting the national strategy on integration.
- UNHCR's partners support those living in the accommodation scheme with job matching or referral to develop skills, vocational trainings and language courses. Of

the recognised refugees living in UNHCR's accommodation, **94% have an AMKA social security number, 77% have an AFM tax number, and 35%** are registered with **OAED unemployment agency**. However, only **8% have a bank account** which is a prerequisite for receiving a salary, among other.

- As of end January, the issuance of a new temporary health number (PAAYPA), which replaces the older AMKA social security number, largely allows asylum-seekers to obtain free healthcare, as well as access to the labour market.
- UNHCR also supports refugees in navigating the Greek civil, social and economic system and obtain access to much needed documents, such as travel papers, and family certificates. This helps refugees become self-reliant, have gainful employment and eventually become integrated into the Greek society.

Returns and Relocation

- UNHCR supports the Greek Government in relocating asylum-seekers and recognised refugees.
- Since the beginning of the Dubs' scheme in 2017, **106 children departed** to the United Kingdom following review by EKKA, UNHCR and IOM, while **13 await** their transfer. UNHCR advocates for the continuation of the programme and for additional solidarity measures by other European states.
- This month, **53 people** were [returned](#) from Greece to Turkey in the framework of the E.U. - Turkey Statement, with a total of **2,054 people** since 20 March 2016.

Shelter and Core Relief Items

- UNHCR with partners is managing – in coordination with the Municipality of Lesvos – the Kara Tepe accommodation site which provides quality accommodation and protection to 1,300 vulnerable people or families.
- UNHCR also helps people who arrive in the northern part of Lesvos, providing basic assistance and a place to stay overnight in the transit site in Skala Sikamineas until the authorities are ready to receive them in the reception and identification centre.

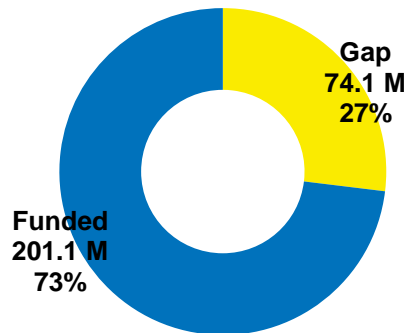
Partners

In January, UNHCR worked through **33 partners**: [UNICEF](#), [ARSIS](#), [Iliaktida](#), [INTERSOS](#), [NOSTOS](#), [Praxis](#), [Solidarity Now](#), [Catholic Relief Services](#), the [International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies](#), [METAdrasi](#), the [Greek Council for Refugees](#), the [Network for Children's Rights](#), [Doctors of the World](#), the [Association for Regional Development and Mental Health \(EPAPSY\)](#), [Diotima](#), [Faros](#), [International Rescue Committee](#), [International Catholic Migration Commission \(ICMC\)](#), [Hellenic Theatre/Drama & Education Network \(TENet\)](#), [UNOPS](#), [Perichoresis](#), [OMNES](#) and the Local Authorities of Athens, Piraeus, Thessaloniki, Livadia, Herakleion, Trikala, Nea Filadelfia – Nea Chalkidona, Karditsa, Larissa, Tripoli and Tilos.

LINKS

FUNDING (AS OF 11 FEBRUARY 2020)

USD 275.2 M requested for the Greece Operation



Donors

Special thanks to the major donors of unrestricted funds in 2020

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

Thanks to other donors of unrestricted funds in 2020

Belgium | Costa Rica | Estonia | Finland | Iceland | Indonesia | Ireland | Kuwait | Lithuania | Luxembourg | Malta | Monaco | Montenegro | New Zealand | Portugal | Qatar | Republic of Korea | Russian Federation | Saudi Arabia | Serbia | Singapore | Sri Lanka | Thailand | Turkey | United Arab Emirates | Uruguay | Private donors

Thanks to major donors of situational, thematic, regional, sub-regional funds 2020

Canada 2.3 M | Morocco | United States of America | Private donors

Thanks to the donors of the Greece Operation in 2020

European Union 198.6 M (incl. firm projections) | Education Cannot Wait 1.4 M | Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints 200 K | The World We Want Foundation 125 K | Norway 104 K

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