

2015 KEY FIGURES

(AS AT END-AUGUST)

103,623

Registered intentions to seek asylum

5,753

Unaccompanied minors

810

Capacity of Asylum Centres

245

Asylum seekers in procedure

15

Persons granted asylum

25%

Of registered asylum-seekers are minors

PRIORITIES

- Assist the Government and civil society in responding to the most urgent humanitarian and protection needs of refugees
- Strengthen the asylum systems in line with applicable international standards

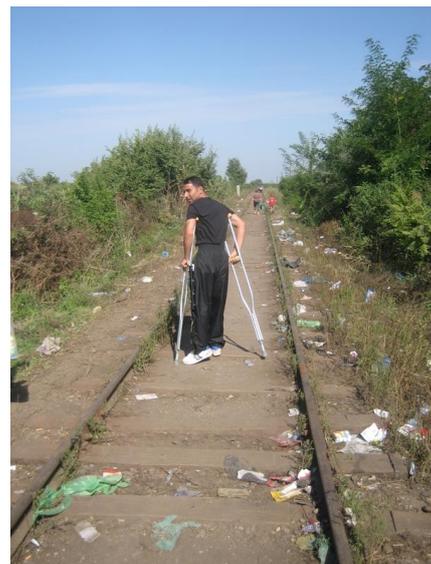
SERBIA

INTER-AGENCY OPERATIONAL UPDATE

8 – 14 September 2015

HIGHLIGHTS

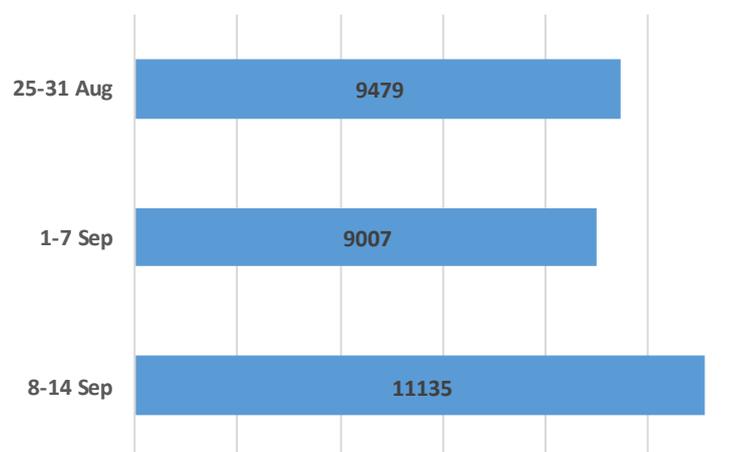
- The number of refugee arrivals from fYRoM reached 8,000 on 10 September. With strong support from UNHCR, registration capacities have been stepped up to around 1,800 persons/day in Preševo and 500/day elsewhere. A total of 37,463 refugees were registered in August 2015, of which 94% were from refugee-producing countries, including 74% from Syria, 12% from Afghanistan and 6% from Iraq.
- As of 14 September 2015, 123,765 PoCs expressed intent to seek asylum in Serbia.
- A diplomatic community fact-finding mission, organized by the Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and UNHCR, visited Preševo and Miratovac on 10 September.
- The Government of Serbia adopted and shared the “Response Plan in case of Mass Influx of Migrants”. The Plan outlines measures to be undertaken in case of influx of migrants of up to 3,000 per day, in the coming 7 months.



A refugee walking along the Subotica-Szeged railroad which was closed on 15 September @HCIT/Ivana Vukašević

Intention to apply for asylum (Source: Ministry of Interior)

11,135 registered their intention to seek asylum during the reporting period.



UPDATE ON ACHIEVEMENTS

Operational Context

Serbia is situated along the preferred route through the Western Balkans for refugees originating from the Middle East and Asia, aiming to seek asylum in Europe. The majority are from Syria, with smaller numbers from Afghanistan and Iraq. Slow but steady increase in the numbers of women and children continues.

Between 14 and 15 September, the Hungarian side of the Serbia/Hungary border was practically sealed with barricades and armed forces being placed on the one remaining entry point for refugees on the Subotica-Szeged railroad, as well as the other two official border crossings.

The Serbian government is continuing to provide refugees with registration and documentation.

Achievements



Protection

Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR works closely with the Government, central and local authorities, and NGO partners to monitor and support refugee protection and humanitarian needs at the main entry and exit points of the country, as well as along their journey throughout the country. Locations covered include Preševo, Bujanovac, Vranje, Dimitrovgrad, Pirot, Negotin, Niš, Zaječar, Belgrade, Subotica, Kanjiža and Šid.
- Together with the Serbian Commissariat for Refugees and Migration (SCRM) and Border Police at the One-Stop Centre in Preševo, UNHCR is prioritising Extremely Vulnerable Individuals (EVIs) to fast-track registration procedures.
- With the increased number of arrivals from fyRoM, which peaked to over 8,000 on 10 September, UNHCR decided to accelerate its request to set up of a Field Office in Preševo, enhanced its daily presence and engaged additional volunteers for food and water distribution and information dissemination in both Preševo and Miratovac.
- On 14 September, the Government of Serbia started to transport refugees by train from Miratovac Refugee Aid Point (RAP) to the Preševo Centre (one wagon holding up to 140 persons, 10-15 min ride to Preševo). As trains only run from 9am to 6pm, UNHCR continued to assist EVIs in reaching registration, protection and aid at the Preševo Centre by provided mini-van. IOM additional 3 more mini-vans for transportation of EVIs to Preševo Centre.
- With the installation of 3 additional fingerprinting machines donated by the UNHCR, the registration capacities of Preševo One Stop Centre have almost doubled to over 2,000 per day, with the border police now operational at the Centre from 6am to 1 am the next day, in shifts.
- Asylum Info Centre team identifies UAMs both at the Centre and at Miksalište in Belgrade.
- Thanks to cooperation between the Serbian Red Cross and Swiss Red Cross organisations, a young Syrian woman seriously injured in a car accident and currently recovering at Subotica hospital was granted a humanitarian visa for Switzerland in order to be reunited with her family members there.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Following the opening of a Child Friendly Space in Preševo One Stop Centre, UNICEF and Danish Refugee Council (DRC) are considering organising a child friendly space within Vašarište RAP, in response to the increased number of families with small children. In Preševo Centre, there were days when more than 120 small children joined various recreational and cognitive activities in the child friendly space facilitated by social workers /protection officers and child facilitators, and with the support of Ministry for Labour, Employment and Social Affairs.

- UNHCR and UNICEF will coordinate with SCRM to have cleaning staff and a pediatric nurse engaged in Preševo Centre, in order to ensure that mothers and children have 24/7 access to the upper floor shelter. UNICEF can fund this initiative.
- UN Women will conduct a gender assessment in both Serbia and fYRoM, which will identify the main risks and issues for women and inform on how UN Women can bring added value to the crisis response.
- Ministry of Interior (MoI) send an official request for assistance to UNHCR which, once addressed, could resolve shortcomings in registration capacities and practices.
- ICRC visited Miratovac and Preševo on 9 September, and are considering support to Red Cross in family reunification.
- Refugees and migrants continue to cross into Serbia from Bulgaria, with the total number of arrivals around 350 daily across the entire stretch of this border.
- UNHCR proposed weekly coordination meetings chaired by SCRM in order to coordinate the interventions of different incoming humanitarian actors – CARE, World Vision, Samaritan's purse, DRC and Danish Peoples' Aid - at Vašarište RAP.



With the colder weather, the need for blankets and sleeping mats became acute for refugees sleeping rough in Belgrade parks
@BCHR/Bogdan Krsić

Education

Achievements and Impact

- In the Banja Koviljača, Krnjača, Bogovađa and Krnjača asylum centres, UNHCR funds DRC activities for children, including a kindergarten supervised by qualified care-givers, and English and Serbian language lessons three times per week to improve their chances of integration within the community.
- The Bogovađa asylum centre conducts sewing classes for women and mothers who are protégés of this centre. This activity boosts refugees' psychological well-being and self-confidence, and empowers with transferable skills. Products include bedsheets used in other asylum centres and the One-Stop Centre in Preševo.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Notwithstanding the above mentioned efforts, refugees and persons granted subsidiary protection continue to face challenges of integration and education opportunities.



Health

Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR continuously supplies medical teams in Preševo, Miratovac, Kanjiža and asylum centre in Krnjača with medication and medical supplies.
- Balkan Centre for Migration (BCM), funded by Catholic Relief Service (CRS), has a medical team in Vašarište RAP present four days a week, as well as 3 translators.
- As of 13 September, Danish Peoples' Aid started to fill gaps in medical service provision in Vašarište RAP.
- WHO Regional Office for Europe issued a Statement by the Regional Director, Dr Zsuzsanna Jakab, on public health issues in the context of the large influx of refugees and migrants, and also published a list of Answers to Frequently Asked Questions on migration and health:
<http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/health-determinants/migration-and-health/news/news/2015/09/population-movement-is-a-challenge-for-refugees-and-migrants-as-well-as-for-the-receiving-population>
- WHO organized a meeting with the Ministry of Health (MoH). UNHCR, UNICEF and UNFPA were requested to continue providing urgent medical assistance to refugees by engaging additional medical staff (doctors and nurses) through the existing medical system and by providing medicines through the state pharmacies. In response to MoH's request and in coordination with the MoH, WHO will distribute the medical supplies.
- MSF mobile teams commute between Miratovac and Preševo on a daily basis, and have a daily presence in Belgrade and Subotica-Horgosz area.
- One medical mobile team from Belgrade municipal health centres is in place in the Faculty of Economics park in Belgrade to provide medical assistance on a daily basis (one doctor and two nurses, 7am-5pm). Assigned health centres change every day.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Medical Aid International visited the Vašarište RAP, in preparation of establishing a mobile medical team to commute between Vašarište and Horgosz/border area.



Food Security and Nutrition

Achievements and Impact

- Youth Office volunteers, Red Cross and UNHCR distribute high-energy biscuits (HEBs) and water provided by UNHCR to refugees arriving from FYRoM to Miratovac RAP.
- A truck with 17.08 MT of HEBs was offloaded in UNHCR warehouse in Belgrade on 11 Sep, completing the WFP donation of 33.61 MT of HEBs.
- Distribution of up to 600 UNHCR-funded food rations daily by the Red Cross is ongoing at Preševo Centre. Red Cross distributes additional 400 rations daily, provided by Caritas Luxembourg and SCRM.
- Red Cross distributes 600 pastry rations provided by SCRM twice daily at Miratovac RAP.
- ADRA continues to provide, through local Red Cross organisations and MSF, 2,000 food and hygiene packages daily, mainly for refugees arriving from Bulgaria.
- Banini, a confectionary company from Serbia donated a van of biscuits and sweets to Vašarište RAP on 14 September.
- HCIT delivered food, baby food, water, hygienic packages and Banini biscuits to refugees at the checkpoint near railroad in Horgosz, at the OBF and Vašarište RAP.
- Eastern European Outreach and Novi Sad Humanitarian Centre delivered food, hygiene and baby packs at the OBF.
- Red Cross distributes food and baby food, donated by the IFRC, once daily at Vašarište RAP, only to refugees with either a referral letters or a completed questionnaire. They also distribute food and water at OBF.
- Citizens are bringing food and NFIs to Info Centre, who then coordinate with Miksalište and take some of the aid over there.
- The Islamic Community of Serbia provided lunch packs to refugees in Belgrade parks.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- UNICEF will expand child friendly corners and spaces for breastfeeding in any needed location.
- UNICEF will establish a system of monitoring nutrition status of refugee children as malnutrition and dehydration is present.
- Red Cross teams at Zaječar, Negotin and Dimitrovgrad/Pirot are distributing food only to EVIs.
- Miksalište is in need of constant supplies of baby food/formula.



Water and Sanitation

Achievements and Impact

- HCIT distributes water to refugees at the OBF and Vašarište RAP daily.
- UNHCR distributed over 15,000 of 1.5 l bottles of water.
- Red Cross distributes water, donated from the Provincial stock reserves, once daily at Vašarište RAP, as well as water donated by the SCRM at Miratovac RAP.
- In coordination with UNHCR and NCA WASH experts, the DRC technical team conducted a Shelter and WASH Assessment in the Preševo One Stop Centre together with Government authorities, in order to improve the current accommodation, hygienic and sanitary conditions.
- In addition to minor infrastructure works funded by the DRC in Vašarište RAP (fence and drainage), the UNHCR will shortly undertake another set of minor infrastructure works in preparation of terrain and local sewage system through the DRC.
- UNHCR employed cleaners for Miratovac RAP and engaged a Preševo municipal garbage truck to collect rubbish twice a day, making the sanitary conditions at this RAP significantly improved.
- UNHCR WASH engaged five workers to clean toilets at Preševo Centre, two of which cover for the night shift as well. 13 chemical toilets are in operation at the Centre now and water supply is available at all points in sufficient quantity. UNHCR, SCRM, DRC and Norwegian Church Aid coordinate WASH improvements and enhancements of the Centre's processing capacity.
- UNOPS installed 10 portable latrines in Miratovac RAP and 5 in the Preševo Centre.
- UNOPS also provided the Preševo Centre with a 10,000 litre water-tank and 10 metal-grid waste containers for PET waste material.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- The refugees staying in the Preševo Centre for several hours are exposed to changing weather conditions.
- Additional, full-time cleaning and maintenance staff are needed at Vašarište RAP.
- Amity NGO appeals for one mobile shower and toilets at Negotin border crossing.
- There is an acute need to improve sanitary conditions at the OBF (no mobile toilets on site).
- MoI requested UNHCR to provide bottled water for the police and gendarmerie at Miratovac RAP.
- The medical container in Miratovac RAP is still in need of water supply (a water tank).



Shelter and NFIs

Achievements and Impact

- HCIT handed out raincoats and hygiene parcels to refugees at the OBF and the bus station in Subotica.
- Red Cross distributes hygienic parcels, donated by the IFRC, once daily at Vašarište RAP.
- UNHCR delivered over 5,500 blankets and 1,000 sleeping mats to Kanjiža RAP, 4,500 sleeping mats to Preševo Centre and 1,900 blankets and 1,200 sleeping mats to the Asylum Info/ Centre in Belgrade.
- UNHCR delivered 1,500 packs of diapers (20 pieces/pack) to the Red Cross warehouse in Preševo.
- UNHCR donated equipment (beds, chairs, cabinets, shelves, paper-rolls, etc.) to the medical teams in Preševo.

- Army personnel is assisting with clearing and preparing the site for capacity enhancement at Preševo Centre, having received gloves and face masks from UNHCR.
- Red Cross distributed clothes for women and children for the first time in Belgrade's Parks on 11 September.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- With the worsening weather conditions, there is a need for more shelter in Miratovac, Preševo and Belgrade.
- UNICEF and the City of Belgrade are finalising plans to create a child-friendly space - emergency shelter for 250 refugee women and children in premises owned by the city situated right next to the train and bus station where most of the refugees shelter and rest in the capital city (former Simpo furniture store).
- Miksalište in Belgrade is in need of donations in warm clothes, jackets, new underwear and shoes, as is the Asylum Info Centre.
- Vašarište RAP has a need for clothes, shoes, jackets, new socks and underwear.
- MoI requested UNHCR to provide shelter for the police and gendarmerie in Miratovac RAP, as well as a supply of protective masks and gloves.
- Sigma plus recommends that the refugees crossing into Serbia from Bulgaria at Negotin should be provided with a stronger shelter where they can await for the registration procedure to be finalised, since the tent previously erected beside the police station by the city of Negotin proved inadequate for the harsher weather conditions.

Working in partnership

- UNHCR continues to co-chair the **Refugee Protection Working Group** together with the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs / Chair of the Inter-Ministerial WG. The last meeting took place on 11 September.
- UN agencies in Serbia continue to elaborate its **internal** coordination mechanism concerned with the response to the refugee crisis. The **UN Country Team Refugee Group** meets on a weekly basis.
- UNHCR implementing partners include: Amity, the Belgrade Centre for Human Rights (BCHR), the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), the Humanitarian Centre for Integration and Tolerance (HCIT), Indigo, INTERSOS, Microfins, Praxis, Sigma Plus and Vizija.
- UNHCR operational partners include the Ministries of Labour, Interior and Health, the SCRM as well as municipal authorities, the UN Country Team, ADRA, CRS, and MSF.

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Links:

<http://www.unhcr.rs/>