

KEY FIGURES

(FEBRUARY 2016)

36,141

Transit registration papers issued

712

Persons of concern registered intention to seek asylum in Serbia

39.5%

of registered refugees and migrants were minors

17

Applications for asylum

7

decisions, of which:

1

Case/person granted refugee status;

1

Case/person granted subsidiary protection;

5 cases/ **13** persons rejected.

PRIORITIES

- Ensure that urgent humanitarian and protection needs of refugees are being met.
- Assist the Government to strengthen the asylum system in line with applicable international standards

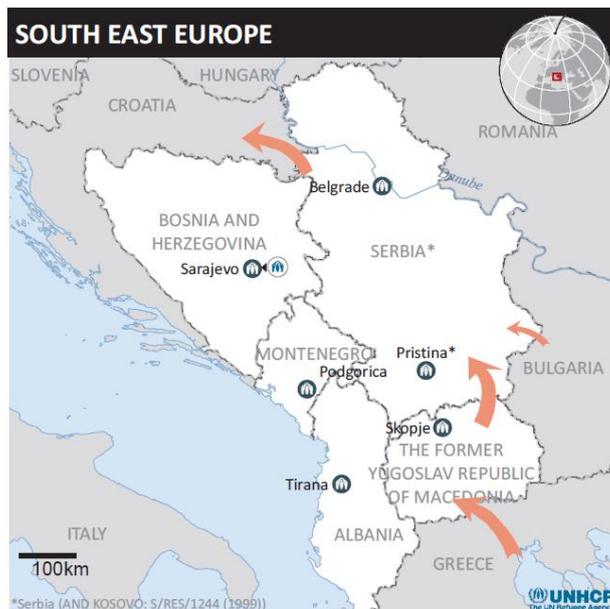
SERBIA

INTER-AGENCY OPERATIONAL UPDATE

29 February-13 March 2016

Highlights

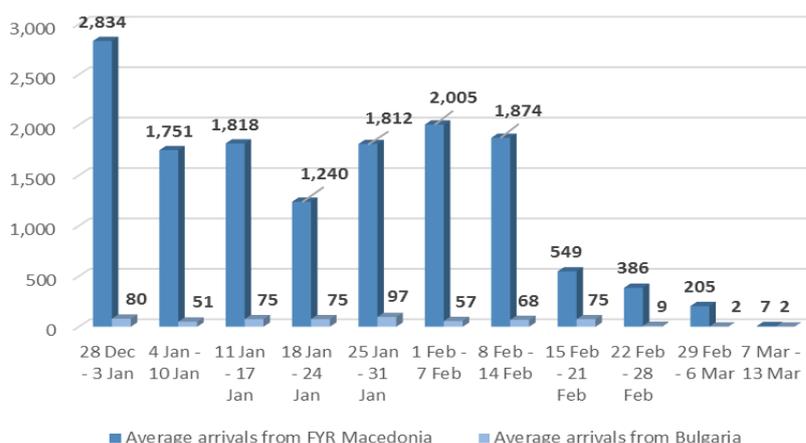
- The number of average daily refugee arrivals decreased to around 100 per day in the first week of March (compared to 1,200 average arrivals per day in February) and practically ceased as of 8 March. 1,520 refugees arrived in total in the first two weeks of March. Close to 200 refugees and migrants were assisted on a daily basis in Belgrade. The percentages of women and children continued to rise.



Printing date: September 2015 Sources: UNCS, UNHCR
The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

- 428 intentions to seek asylum in Serbia were registered in the first two weeks of March (Source: Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Serbia - Mol), compared to 472 in the last two weeks of February.
- 36,853 new arrivals were registered in February 2016, as compared to 58,939 in January. 38.5% of these were men, 22% women and 39.5% children. Over 46% were from Syria, 28% from Afghanistan, 25% from Iraq and less than 1% from other countries of origin. 712 expressed their intention to seek asylum in Serbia in February while all others received “transit documents”.

Daily average arrivals from FYR Macedonia & Bulgaria



UPDATE ON ACHIEVEMENTS

Operational Context

The last train departed from Šid to Slavonski brod in Croatia on 5 March and there were no further departures in the reporting period. Arrivals to Šid from the south of the country practically ceased.

On 7 March, Croatia informed the Serbian Mol that Slovenia, a member of the EU, would start enforcing a new regime for entering the Schengen zone and would not receive migrants without valid visas and passports as of midnight that day. On 8 March, the Serbian Mol said in a statement, following Slovenia's decision, that it would coordinate all migration-related measures with the EU and implement them on its southern and eastern borders: “This *practically means the closing of the Balkan route*”, the Mol said in the statement.

According to the Serbian Commissariat for Refugees and Migration (SCRM), around 2,000 refugees and migrants were present in the country at the end of the reporting period, the majority being accommodated in the facilities in the South and West (of which 850 in Šid/Adaševci, 682 in Preševo, 302 in four Asylum Centres and nine in Centres for Minors).

Due to entry restrictions, around 470 refugees, including women and children, were stranded on the fYR Macedonia side of the “white stone” at the green border with Serbia since 7 March. In heavy rain, they were assisted by UNHCR and partners from fYR Macedonia. On 11 March, fYR Macedonian authorities invited the group to return to better shelter and services in Tabanovce. By the end of the reporting period, some 370 decided to remain at the border, hoping to still be able to continue their journey through Serbia.

On 8 March, the Minister of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs Mr. Aleksandar Vulin and the UN Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees Ms Kelly Clements visited Preševo RC. The DHC met with stranded refugees in Preševo, who expressed their frustrations, anxiety about the future and asked UNHCR for assistance in their situation.



Preševo – UNHCR Deputy High Commissioner Kelly Clements touring the Reception Centre in Preševo together with the Minister of Labour Aleksandar Vulin, Photo©UNHCR

Achievements



Achievements and Impact

- On 29 February, the Ministry of Labor signed an Agreement on donation which the Balkan Centre for Migration (BCM), funded by the Catholic Relief Services (CRS), providing 21,000 EUR in assistance to refugees in the Republic of Serbia. The funds will be used for the staffing of the (RC) in Preševo from February to April 2016. Since July 2015, CRS Serbia provided around USD 3 mil worth of direct assistance to refugees.
- Representatives of the SCRM, Ministry of Interior (MoI) and Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veterans and Social Police (MoL), UNHCR, UNICEF and IOM met on 4 March in Belgrade to discuss the format of a **joint assessment of the protection/solution needs of stranded refugees/migrants**. It was agreed that the exercise would commence on 7 March in the Reception Centre (RC) in Preševo and that it should allow the stranded refugees/migrants to take informed decisions on their plight within the framework of applicable national and international law. Protection profiling exercise continued throughout the reporting period, with many of the refugees interviewed exhibiting signs of trauma and distress, and referred for psychosocial support.
- ADRA's team of interpreters was involved, in two shifts, together with UNHCR and IOM, in the information gathering interviews with the refugees accommodated in Preševo RC. Interview teams managed to talk to 5-9 persons per shift.
- UNHCR's implementing partner HCIT maintained a 24/7 presence at the Šid train station, Šid RAP and Principovac and Adaševci RAPs, providing legal aid/protection and information (2,350 asylum-seekers), fast tracking (24 persons with special needs - PSNs) and referrals (356 referrals to medical staff of WAHA and Šid doctors). HCIT conducted detailed interviews with 33 asylum-seekers, filled in 4 protection incident reports and assisted 3 asylum-seekers in registering their intent to seek asylum. In the majority of 560 instances where asylum-seekers were refused entry on board of trains headed to Croatia, UNHCR and HCIT provided counselling on the asylum procedure in Serbia.
- Red Cross of Šid provided SIM cards to vulnerable individuals in Šid RAP, with 5 minutes time to call abroad.
- Télécoms Sans Frontières (TSF) continued covering 100% of the Preševo One-Stop Centre with free Wi-Fi access for migrants and the humanitarian community through its fast, high density network, peaking at 275 simultaneously connected devices and 134,270 unique mobile terminals connected since September 2015.
- TSF developed the Digital Signage solution (hardware, software, training) used by Mercy Corps, Oxfam and the UNHCR to feed information to migrants through TV display screens installed in the Preševo One-Stop Centre.
- Mercy Corps installed the WiFi router at Principovac RAP, facilitating refugees' access to mobile network.
- UNHCR buses continued to transport refugees from Miratovac to Preševo Reception Centre (RC).
- While at earlier stages MC protection team provided transportation for PSNs from the green border to Preševo RC, it switched to supporting local transportation for refugees based at Preševo RC.



*Šid - A refugee boy proud of his drawing,
Photo@UNHCR*

- Save the Children continued to transport vulnerable refugees from Miratovac RAP to Miratovac village. 850 adults and 550 children were provided with transport by 2 SCI vans.
- Novi Sad Humanitarian Centre (NSHC) was present 12 hours a day, 7 days a week at Adaševci RAP. With the support from TDH, NSHC provided recreational outreach activities for 498 children and 103 parents and 142 beneficiaries benefited from psychological first aid and support activities.
- With the support from IRC, NSHC provided protection services (help with accommodation, provision of information, referrals) to 2,677 vulnerable refugees in Adaševci and Šid.
- UNICEF and partners were adapting child friendly spaces (CFSs) in order to meet the needs of refugee and migrant children who became stranded in Serbia. This includes educational activities, hygiene promotion, stress management and programs tailored for adolescents.
- UNICEF was requested to support the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs with ten additional professional social workers to be deployed in the Centre for Social Work (CSW) operational in border-crossing areas. These additional staff will contribute to improving CSW's capacity to deal with the emergency.
- UNICEF finalised a partnership agreement with the Association of Social Work Professionals in order to strengthen the child protection system and its capacity to respond to the needs of refugee children and families. This partnership will include additional operational support to the Centres for Social Work and capacity building for social workers.
- UNICEF-supported CFSs, where children can access recreational and psychosocial services, continued to be operational in Preševo and Miratovac (in partnership with Danish Refugee Council) and in Adaševci and Šid (in partnership with World Vision and SOS Children's Villages). 2,393 children and 742 caregivers were assisted.
- As of 1 March, in cooperation with Save the Children, ADRA initiated a Youth Corner at the Asylum Info Center in Belgrade. This project offers referrals, protection and a 'drop-in' center opened 24/7.
- ADRA outreach teams in Preševo RC assisted with 305 medical referrals and psychological interventions. In view of the new dynamics in the RC, where the refugees are bound to stay for longer periods, ADRA's outreach team was working intensely on animating the children and developing new projects with cultural/educational content.
- In Adaševci, People in Need (PIN), People in Peril Association (PIPA) and the Czech Team were providing leisure indoor/outdoor activities for children. In Šid, the team was filling the gaps and providing NFIs for further distribution.
- Save the Children (SC) provided accommodation to 27 mothers, 52 children, and 9 babies in the Safe Space premises in Preševo. Out of all the beneficiaries, 48 used sleeping services that the Safe Space offers. Inside the RC, SC was working on identifying unaccompanied and separated children (UASCs) and other extremely vulnerable children. SC team took part in assessment initiated by the MoL, in order to understand the structure of refugees currently in the centre. Another 89 children (of which 11 identified as potential UASC, including 3 girls) and 45 parents were reached and assisted with information and referrals through the Mobile Child Safety Team in Preševo. A number of psychosocial activities was conducted for and with those children on daily basis, along with the distribution of hygiene, clothes and SIM cards which allowed some of the children to get in touch with their parents for the first time after several months.
- Through the static CFS in Belgrade, SC assisted 225 children (accompanied 146 boys and 69 girls and 32 potential UASCs). Through the Mobile Child Safety Unit in Adaševci, SC assisted 212 children (141 boys and 63 girls, of which 31 potential UASCs) with information and referral.
- As a result of border restrictions and fewer arrivals, the number of families and individuals supported by Mercy Corps (MC) through the Cash Transferring Program (CTP) in Preševo decreased significantly. 62 cards were distributed in total, of which 50 were vulnerable families and 12 cards were given to vulnerable individuals.
- As part of information provision to refugees, MC (in cooperation with partners - SCRIM, UNHCR and Divac Foundation - played a video presentation on TV screens located in Šid Grey House and street wall of MC office. The presentation concerned behavioural/hygiene practices and collaboration with aid-workers. MC teams also continued provision of Internet connection and translation services at train stations in Šid and Preševo. MC Šid office served as a help desk for asylum seekers providing services such as scanning, photocopying etc. The refugeeinfo.eu web platform was updated to reflect recent changes in border crossing procedures.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Asylum info Center (AIC) noted cases where members of the same refugee family were referred to different asylum centres. To try and avoid family separations, AIC intervened with the police and/or Krnjača AC, in order to ensure that the entire family in question was accommodated together at Krnjača, thus preventing family separations.
- Asylum-seekers accommodated in Adaševci RAP continued to ask for better access to services (post office/Western Union, exchange office, etc.).
- In Adaševci RAP, families were separated by being separately accommodated: majority of mothers were staying with their children at the motel and the men/husbands were accommodated in rub-halls outside.
- With the large number of stranded refugees, there is an increased need for psycho-social support services and recreational activities.
- Preliminary findings of Protection Assessments indicate the need for restoring core family links in a number of cases, involving family members in foreign countries.

Education

Achievements and Impact

- NSTR

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

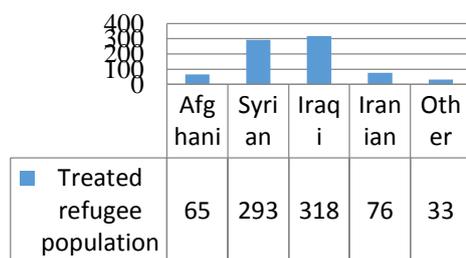
- NSTR

Health

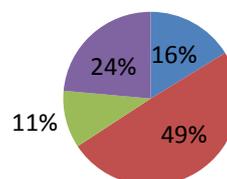
Achievements and Impact

- DRC and UNHCR continued providing medical assistance to refugees in Miratovac and Preševo, through two medical teams, and in Belgrade through another two medical teams, engaged with the support from the local Primary Health Centres. DRC/UNHCR provided medicines for the refugees through contracted local state pharmacies. DRC Medical Team continued to follow-up hospitalised PSNs, in order to ensure additional support.
- UNHCR/DRC medical team continued to assist around 10 refugees daily in Belgrade, mostly undocumented refugees with no access to accommodation.
- UNFPA mobile clinics provided services in Šid and Preševo. Patients were either treated on site or referred to local health centres for follow up, when needed.
- Due to decreased numbers of arrivals from Bulgaria, WAHA International's field medical team in Dimitrovgrad treated only 28 refugees in the reporting period (27 Iraqi nationals and one refugee from Afghanistan), including 14 children. There were 14 recorded cases of upper and lower respiratory infections, 10 cases of bodily traumas and 5 cases of skin conditions, as well as one case of hospitalization with organized medical transport
- WAHA medical station in Šid treated 785 refugees. The most common afflictions were upper and lower respiratory infections recorded in 418 cases (witnessing the continuous battle of the refugees with the unseasonably cold weather). Only 66 cases of bodily injuries and traumas were recorded, since fewer refugees had arrived from Bulgaria where light or severe injuries and traumas were common. 118 patients received treatment for gastrointestinal diseases and another 28 patients came with dermatological conditions. Five pregnant women entered the clinic to receive treatment. Seventeen patients were advised to seek urgent medical specialists' attention. At least two patients ignored this advice on the grounds of not wanting to miss the train to Croatia.

Refugee population treated by WAHA in Šid



■ Adult women ■ Adult men
■ Girls under 18 ■ Boys under 18



- HCIT distributed three wheelchairs PSNs in Šid, donated by IRC.
- UNHCR donated 42 wheelchairs to vulnerable refugees in Preševo, Šid and Belgrade area.
- Second part of a two-day workshop on health in refugee crisis, prevention of communicable diseases, and health promotion was held on 4 March in Šid, attended by 32 field workers from 10 institutions/NGOs. The workshop was organized by NSHC and TDH in collaboration with the Institute of Public Health of Serbia and the Department of Public Health in Sremska Mitrovica.
- PIN/PIPA/Czech team continued to assist with regular check-up along with a doctor from MSF and an interpreter at Adaševci RAP.
- ADRA team for the trains, consisting of a medical doctor, an interpreter and a social worker/psychologist, followed the refugees to Niš on 3 occasions (29 February, 3 March and 5 March).

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- NSTR



Food Security and Nutrition

Achievements and Impact

- Red Cross received funding from ECHO aimed at providing hot meals and feeding the “stranded population”. SCRM was discussing with the Red Cross the establishment of a feeding programmes in all three RAPs in Šid area.
- At Preševo RC, Caritas provided cooked rice for breakfast and REMAR distributed lentil soup and fruit for lunch for the stranded refugees. Red Cross provided standard food parcels.
- UNHCR and partners HCIT, Society for Peace Development and Ecology (SPDE), Asylum Info Center (BCHR), Sigma Plus and Amity distributed 9,817 litres of water, 2,245 food cans, 706 kgs of food, 480 kgs of WFP high-energy biscuits (HEBs) and 34kgs of biscuits in Preševo, Šid and Belgrade.
- NSHC and CARE distributed 2,076 food packages (1,246 in Adaševci and 830 in Šid).
- Buddhist Compassion Relief Tzu Chi Foundation was serving up to 500 hot meals once daily at Adaševci and Šid RAPs, using REMAR’s kitchen.

- UNICEF provided technical support and recommendations to Red Cross on optimal food baskets for infants and young children to ensure that children's nutritional needs are being met.
- UNICEF-supported mother-and-baby corners (MBCs), where lactating mothers can continue to breastfeed, receive information on breastfeeding and infant and young child feeding, and access necessary hygiene items, continued to be operational in Preševo and Miratovac (operating 24/7 in partnership with Danish Refugee Council), and in Adaševci and Šid (operating 24/7 in partnership with World Vision and SOS Children's Villages). 876 babies and 754 mothers were assisted in the four MBCs.
- UNICEF supported 356 mothers with infant and young child feeding counselling and provided 425 babies with nutritional support.
- Caritas continued, in cooperation with the Red Cross, to provide food parcels daily in Preševo, Adaševci and Belgrade (Krnjača asylum center and the Red Cross container in the park near the central railway and bus station), based on the needs. 5,150 food parcels, 10,000 portions of soup and 15,700 tea cups were distributed.



*Šid - Refugees heating up canned beans,
Photo@UNHCR*

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Larger quantities of baby food/Bebelac 1 were needed in Šid RAP.

Water and Sanitation

Achievements and Impact

- 3 WFP containers (shower cabins) were moved from Šid RAP to Principovac by SCRM, in light of the planned transfer of Šid RAP population to Principovac RAP.
- Caritas-CRS bathroom container with showers, located in Miksalište in Belgrade, was used to provide refugees a chance of taking a free shower during their travel. 275 refugees used the shower in the reporting period.
- PIN/PIPA/Czech volunteers' team assisted in managing showers at Adaševci RAP.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Refugees complained of unsanitary conditions at Šid RAP and lack of hot water in Adaševci RAP.

Shelter and NFIs

Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR site planners were present in Principovac RAP, contributing to the preparation of this site for accommodating refugees from the Šid RAP. HELP and SCRМ were working on improving the reception conditions at Principovac RAP (WASH facilities, electricity network, and furnishing).
- UNHCR and partners HCIT, SPDE, Asylum Info Center (BCHR), Sigma Plus and Amity distributed 1,481 blankets, 1,642 pairs of socks, 822 pairs of footwear, 824 winter jackets, 345 raincoats, 71 sleeping mats, 370 sleeping bags, 1,350 hygiene gels, 260 plastic bags, 780 hygiene packs and 20 plastic sheets/tarpaulins in Preševo, Belgrade and Šid area.



*Šid - Twin refugee girls donning their new ECHO jackets,
Photo©UNHCR*

- Caritas continued, in cooperation with the Red Cross, to provide hygiene packs for women and babies daily in Preševo, Belgrade and Adaševci. Caritas distributed 1,210 hygiene parcels for women, 460 hygiene parcels for children, 1,100 rain jackets for adults, 270 rain jackets for children, 80 fleece jackets for adults, 30 fleece jackets for children, 737 shoes for adults, 292 shoes for children, 1,170 hats for adults, 70 hats for children, 5,276 pairs of socks for adults and 320 pairs of socks for children.
- NSHC and TDH provided 4,861 winter and hygienic items were distributed to 995 beneficiaries, mainly children and mothers. NSHC and CARE provided 931 non-food items (hats, gloves, socks) and 85 hygienic packages to refugees in Adasevci.
- UNICEF, through its partners DRC, World Vision and HCIT, reached 2,097 children with winter items (raincoats, sets of winter hat, scarf and gloves, winter jackets, thermal underwear sets, pairs of winter boots, pairs of winter socks, overall outerwear for babies and thermal cover baby sets).
- In Adaševci, the PIN/PIPA/Czech volunteers team distributed 820 baby diapers (6 sizes), 250 hygiene kits, 95 raincoats, 1,100 pairs of gloves, 1,000 pairs of socks, 285 pairs of underwear, 1,350 hats, jackets, sweaters, pants, and all types of baby and children's wear.
- ADRA's NFI team distributed 123 winter jackets inside the RC Preševo, as well as 109 pairs of children's underwear, 79 pairs of women's underwear and 89 children's shirts.
- SC's partner Group 484 was distributing warm clothes and shoes for children and adults. 1,115 children (536 boys and 579 girls) and 879 adults (461 men and 417 women) were reached with winter clothes and boots. A total of 6,155 items were distributed. In addition, 55 baby blankets were distributed.
- Mercy Corps (MC) continued using two containers at Preševo train station as shelter for refugees. In total 250 refugees used these containers, of which 33% women and 38% children. MC teams in Preševo took part in providing assistance to 437 refugees stranded at FYR Macedonia-Serbia border. Assistance included delivery of family tents, power generator and charging units, torches, tools and labor for soil drainage.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Due to wet and muddy weather conditions, the need arose to spread gravel in-between the rub-halls at Adaševci RAP.
- Rub Halls in Šid RAP were overcrowded, with some refugee families sleeping on the floor, and were not properly heated. Adaševci RAP was likewise overcrowded.

- A number of asylum-seekers continued to be referred to the substandard facilities in Sjenica and Tutin.



Šid - Refugees resting in one of the rub halls in the RAP, Photo@UNHCR



Support to local communities

Achievements and Impact

- CARE/Nexus continued to provide financial support to the public utility company Moravica for daily garbage collection in Miratovac RAP and twice per week in Miratovac village (the Mosque), for the period up to 30 April 2016.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- NSTR

Working in partnership

- The internal coordination mechanism of the UN system in Serbia is the **UN Refugee Theme Group (RTG)**, which meets every Friday under UNHCR chairmanship. The RTG coordinates the 4 sectorial working groups (WGs): a) Refugee Protection WG (Co-chaired by the Ministry of Labour, Employment Veteran and Social Policy (hereinafter: MoL) & UNHCR), b) the WG on Shelter/NFI/WASH (Co-chaired by Serbian Commissariat for Refugees and Migration (SCRM), MoL & UNHCR), c) WG on Health/Food/Nutrition (Co-chaired by the Ministry of Health & WHO) and d) WG on Local Community Support (Co-chaired by the Ministry of Local Self-Government & UNDP). The RTG met on 4th and 11th March.
- The **Refugee Protection Working Group (RPWG)**, Co-chaired by UNHCR and the MoL, met on 25 February in Belgrade. It is the key coordination mechanism for agencies/NGOs operational in the country, as well as a source of information for donors/diplomatic missions who attend its meetings as observers. RPWG has over 150 members and meets on a fortnightly basis. Under UNHCR lead, RPWG has given rise to three sub- working groups (SWGs) on: a) Information for Refugees, b) Child Protection and c) Non-Food Items (NFIs).
- Field coordination meetings take place every week in Preševo (co-chaired by MoL & UNHCR) and Šid (co-chaired by SCRM & UNHCR).
- The monthly **Partners' Briefing**, where UNHCR/UNRC, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and MoL/Chair of Government WG on Mixed Migration update the diplomatic corps/donors and NGOs on the refugee/migrant situation and the response of UN agencies and their partners in the previous period, took place on 25 February in Belgrade.

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