

Greece

This month **2,900 people arrived by sea and 1,500 by land**. Despite the fewer arrivals, the increased arrivals of April and the lack of sufficient accommodation in the mainland and the islands has created **overcrowding in many sites**. This resulted in difficult conditions, increasing protection risks and tension particularly in sites in Central Macedonia. A violent incident in Moria, Lesvos led 900 people to seek temporary shelter elsewhere on the island. **The need to increase accommodation across the country is urgent.**

REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS IN GREECE*

58,100

14,400 on the islands and 43,700 in the mainland

Arrivals in 2018



*UNHCR estimate as of 31 May 2018 of those who arrived and remained in Greece since the 2015 – 2016 flow

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

49,100

eligible asylum-seekers and refugees this month, and 73,900 since April 2017 received **cash assistance**.

1,087

people this month, and 27,300 since June 2016 from the islands **transferred** to the mainland with UNHCR support.

21,200

people this month, and 48,300 since November 2015 have benefitted from UNHCR's **accommodation in apartments**.

UNHCR PRESENCE

Staff:

397 National Staff

52 International Staff

Offices:

1 Country Office in Athens

3 Mainland Offices in Attika, Thessaloniki, Ioannina

6 Island Offices in Lesvos, Chios, Samos, Leros, Kos, Rhodes



An Iraqi family at the Diavata site near Thessaloniki. The family crossed into Greece via the Evros River.

Working with Partners

- UNHCR supports the Government of Greece who leads the refugee response. The Office works with other UN agencies, international and national NGOs, regional and State institutions, community-based organizations, refugee and host communities through sectoral Working Groups at the national and field levels.

Main Activities

Accommodation and Cash Assistance

- In May 49,057 people received **cash assistance** from UNHCR which restores dignity and empowers asylum-seekers and refugees who can choose how to cover their basic needs. It also contributes to the economy of the host community through the purchase of services and goods.
- UNHCR has created 25,110 places to house asylum-seekers in **rented accommodation**, providing people with a sense of normalcy and facilitating their access to services and education. It also helps the eventual integration of those who will remain in Greece while the host population benefits from the renting of their apartments. So far, 48,283 people have benefited from UNHCR's accommodation since November 2015.
- UNHCR works with the Government, local authorities in several Municipalities and NGOs to provide urban accommodation and cash assistance to asylum-seekers in Greece, funded by the Emergency Support to Integration and Accommodation (**ESTIA**) of the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO).

Protection

- UNHCR supports the Ministry of Migration Policy (MoMP) **transfer** authorized asylum-seekers from the islands to the mainland to continue their asylum applications. This helps alleviate the overcrowded conditions in the Reception and Identification Centres (RICs) of the Aegean islands.
- The number of those transferred decreased this month as a result of a lack of available accommodation in the mainland. 1,087 asylum-seekers were transferred from Lesbos (739), Samos (150), Chios (86), Kos (78) and Leros (34).
- UNHCR assisted some 4,400 asylum-seekers and beneficiaries of international protection in 2018 with **legal aid** through its partners Greek Council for Refugees (GCR), Ecumenical Refugee Program (ERP) and METAdrasi.
- METAdrasi and GCR also provide legal aid at the **appeal stage** of the asylum procedure with more than 300 people assisted this year.
- UNHCR **supported the Asylum Service** by helping in over 1,500 instances caseworkers with on-the-job training and advice on drafting decisions and conducting interviews.
- UNHCR and its partners support **people with specific needs**. By the end of April, nearly 200 people with serious mental health conditions and disabilities were assisted

with UNHCR and its partners with hospitalization, case follow-up, consultation, peer-counselling, as well as through the provision of carers and medical equipment.

- UNHCR provides information to refugees and asylum-seekers in Greece through the [HELP website](#) on [applying for asylum](#), on [rights and obligations](#) as well as on how to access services when [living in Greece](#).

Child Protection

- The 3,400 unaccompanied children in Greece exceed the 1,101 places in shelters (Source: EKKA). As a result, children risk spending extended periods in the reception and identification centres (RICs) and in protective custody in police stations.
- UNHCR coordinates and works with partners to enhance the protection of children at risk in the island RICs through legal aid, psychosocial support and case management as well as through **child and youth-friendly spaces**.
- UNHCR facilitated through its partner the transfer of 414 unaccompanied children from the islands' RICs and detention centres to the mainland since January.
- Along with partners, UNCHR works with the authorities to diversify alternative care arrangements. This includes family-based foster care for younger children, and **Supported Independent Living (SIL)** for adolescents over 16 years old, now in its pilot phase in Crete. Dedicated guardians and support teams assist children in SIL.
- UNHCR also facilitates the transfer of children who turn eighteen to rented housing in its Accommodation Scheme. This helps free much needed space in shelters and also ensures support to the young adults during this transitional period.
- UNHCR supports the MoMP, the General Secretariat for the Welfare of Asylum-seekers, the Ministry of Labour, Social Insurance and Social Solidarity, and the General Secretariat for Welfare through the (EKKA) on the transfer of eligible unaccompanied children from Greece to the UK within the framework of the 'Dubs Scheme'. So far, 15 children have departed with seven more expected to depart shortly.
- UNHCR helps identify children at risk and helps build the expertise of national and local actors. UNHCR also provides advice and technical support to the Government and expert staff to EKKA, the agency responsible for the referral of unaccompanied children to shelters. It also works with humanitarian actors and stakeholders develop procedures that ensure that at least the minimum standards for child protection are in place.

Prevention and Response to Sexual and Gender-based Violence

- Poor shelter allocation and a lack of privacy as a result of overcrowding in island reception centres and some mainland sites compromise safe access to WASH facilities and result in an increased risk of sexual violence (SGBV).
- UNHCR and partners have developed standard operating procedures to prevent and respond to sexual violence. They have also developed referral pathways that direct survivors to the support they need.
- On the islands UNHCR identifies survivors and people at risk, offers legal information and counselling and refers them to appropriate services also through partners Médecins du Monde (Mdm) and Praksis. However, the limited services in some of the RICs mean that survivors cannot always access them on time.

- In the mainland, UNHCR works to prevent and respond to sexual violence through national NGOs, the DIOTIMA-Centre for Research on Women Issues, GCR and Arsis in sites in the mainland and urban locations in Athens and Thessaloniki.

Education

- Refugee and asylum-seeking children in urban accommodation can attend regular school classes together with Greek nationals. Additionally, special reception classes in primary and secondary education called Zones of Educational Priority (ZEP) facilitate learning Greek as a foreign language.
- Children in sites mostly attend afternoon classes that aim to facilitate their entry in the public school system.
- UNHCR supports non-formal education on the islands, where formal education is not yet available for most children.

Health

- UNHCR works with the Ministry of Health, KEELPNO and other partners to ameliorate refugees' and asylum-seekers' access to healthcare.
- The limited public mental health institutions in Greece are a particular problem and UNHCR with partners work to identify alternative referral pathways to direct those who are affected by mental health issues to public institutions.
- UNHCR collaborates with the Association for Regional Development and Mental Health, EPAPSY on a pilot project to provide long-term support to 30 people in accommodation and short hospitalization for those requiring intensive care.
- UNHCR funds primary and psychosocial support services in Lesbos and Chios, and mental health services in Attika where psychiatrists and psychologists provide services at the polyclinic of the municipality of Athens.

Durable Solutions

- The enhanced capacity of the Asylum Service have translated into an accelerated pace for the granting of international protection to those in need. In 2017, 10,364 people received refugee status or subsidiary protection, 20 per cent more people than between June 2013 and December 2016 (8,732). By the end of April 2018, 3,959 people received international protection.
- The increased number of recognized refugees translates into a pressing need to support their transition from the assistance they received as asylum-seekers to the national programmes they are eligible for in Greece.
- To facilitate this transition, UNHCR with the Government and actors have agreed on a transitional period of some months during which recognized refugees can access cash assistance and accommodation, on a case-by-case basis.
- In May 2018, 3,980 beneficiaries of international protection were accommodated in apartments of UNHCR's Scheme, and 7,000 received cash assistance.

Relocation and Returns

- Relocation concluded in September 2017 with 22,000 people having departed from Greece to other EU Member States.

- This month, 18 people were returned from Greece to Turkey in the framework of the E.U. - Turkey Statement. Since 20 March 2016, 1,630 people have been **returned** to Turkey.

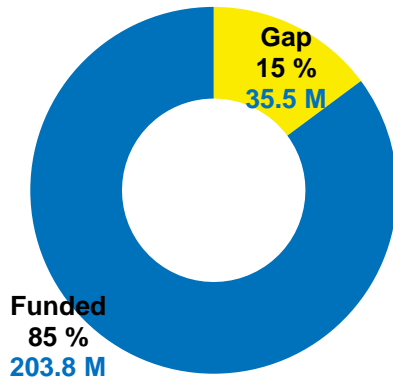
Logistics

- As many of the sites in the mainland are remote from services and public transportation UNHCR has facilitated people's access to the Asylum Service or other services by providing transportation to nearly 4,000 people around Greece in May.

Partners

In May, UNHCR worked through 33 partners: on Accommodation with ARSIS, Iliaktida, Intersos, NOSTOS, Praxis, Solidarity Now, Catholic Relief Services, Terre des Hommes, and the Local Authorities of Athens, Thessaloniki, Livadia, Crete, Trikala, Nea Filadelfia – Nea Chalkidona, Karditsa, Larissa and Tripoli; on Cash Assistance with Catholic Relief Services, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and Mercy Corps; on Legal Aid with the Ecumenical Refugee Program, METAdrasi and the Greek Council for Refugees; on Child Protection with ARSIS, METAdrasi, Network for Children's Rights, and Praxis; on PwSN with ARSIS, Doctors of the World, the National Confederation of Disabled People and the Association for Regional Development and Mental Health (EPAPSY); on Prevention and Response to SGBV with Diotima; on Peaceful Coexistence and Integration with Solidarity Now, ARSIS, Faros, the Greek Council for Refugees, Intersos, and KEAN; on Site Management Support (SMS) with the International Rescue Committee; on Interpretation Services and Messaging with METAdrasi; on Awareness Raising with the Hellenic Theatre/Drama & Education Network (TENet); and on the Deployment of Affiliate Workforce with UNOPS and the International Catholic Migration Commission.

FUNDING (AS OF 5 JUNE 2018)

USD 239.3 M requested for the Greece Operation

Donors

Special thanks to the major donors of unrestricted funds

Sweden 98.2 M | Norway 42.5 M | Netherlands 39.1 M | Private donors Spain 32.9 M | United Kingdom 31.7 M | Denmark 25.5 M | Australia 18.9 M | Switzerland 15.2 M | Private donors Republic of Korea 12.6 M | Italy 11.2 M

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Thanks to the donors of the Greece Operation

European Union 195 M | Private donors Switzerland 0.5 M | Fondation BNP Paribas 0.3 M

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LINKS

[Mediterranean Situation](#) - [UNHCR Greece](#) - [Twitter](#) - [Facebook](#) – [Britain's Prince Charles and Duchess of Cornwall meet refugees on Crete \(Video\)](#)