

Greece Aegean Islands

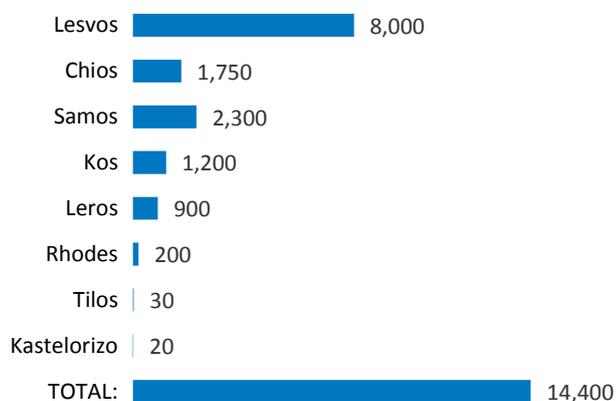
Arrivals kept pace in May (2,900) compared to April (3,000). Lesbos received the highest number, 53 per cent and were mainly **Syrian, Iraqi, and Afghan families.**

Seven people were injured and 900 asylum-seekers left the Moria reception centre for other sites on Lesbos after violent clashes on 25 May.

Government-authorized transfers from the islands **slowed** to 1,100 in May from 1,600 in April, as reception remained overstretched.

POPULATION OF CONCERN

Host Islands

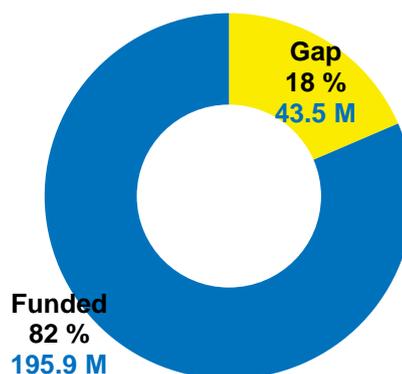


* UNHCR Greece estimate as of 30 May 2018 of those who remained on the Aegean islands since the 2015-2016 mass flow.

FUNDING (AS OF 5 JUNE 2018)

USD 239.3 M

requested for the Greece operation



UNHCR PRESENCE

Staff:

53 National Staff
5 International Staff

Offices:

1 Islands Unit in Athens
1 Sub Office on Lesbos
3 Field Offices on Chios, Samos, Kos
2 Field Units on Leros and Rhodes



A Syrian Kurdish family from Kobani at the volunteer-run centre of PIKPA in Lesbos.

Working with Partners

UNHCR supports the Government of Greece who coordinates the refugee response. The Office works with other UN agencies, international and national NGOs, State and regional institutions, community-based organisations, refugees, and host communities through sectoral working groups on **Lesvos, Chios, Samos, Kos** and **Leros**.

Main Activities

Protection

- UNHCR provides information on rights and obligations, asylum procedures and offers legal counselling and representation to asylum-seekers directly and through partners. UNHCR identifies and refers people with specific needs to responsible authorities and service providers for targeted assistance.
- On 25 May, a violent clash between refugee groups in Moria on **Lesvos** led to some 900 people seeking shelter outside the reception centre. UNHCR temporarily hosted some 250 people at the transit facility in the northern part of the island, provided advice to asylum-seekers on required actions and guidance to the authorities for the resolution of the issue and offered 300 solar lamps to ease safety concerns.

Prevention and Response to Sexual and Gender-Based Violence

- UNHCR works to identify people at risk and SGBV survivors, provides legal information and refers them to appropriate services where they can receive specialized support.
- Sexual harassment and violence, including against men, continued to be a major risk in the reception centres. Access to medical care and psychosocial support can be slow and limited hindering the management of cases.
- On **Lesvos**, UNHCR and KEELPNO launched an awareness-raising campaign on contraception and abortion.

Child Protection

- UNHCR supports the identification of children at risk and assists in building the expertise of national and local actors. UNHCR coordinates with humanitarian actors and stakeholders to enhance the protection of children through legal aid, psychosocial support and case management.
- Living conditions for unaccompanied children remained alarming on **Lesvos** where the unaccompanied often share space with adults and **Samos** where educational and recreational opportunities are very limited. This month, UNHCR supported the authorities in transferring 60 unaccompanied children from the reception centres to temporary facilities on the mainland until their referral to appropriate shelters. Since January 2018, 365 children have been transferred to shelters on the mainland.

Education

- UNHCR runs educational and recreational centres to ensure that the development and well-being of refugee children and youth, including unaccompanied minors, is supported in a conducive learning environment as access to formal education on the islands is not fully rolled-out and access to public schools remains a constraint.
- The first reception facility for refugee education was established on **Lesvos** with some 30 children attending classes.
- UNHCR, the Ministry of Education and the University of Aegean on **Rhodes** signed a memorandum of cooperation to promote and support education initiatives for refugee children and adults on the island.

Health

- UNHCR's partner offers primary health services to the residents of Kara Tepe on **Lesvos**.
- Across the islands, medical and psychosocial services is limited in the reception centres and hospitals. On **Kos** and **Leros**, due to the low number of national service staff under the Ministry of Health, in particular doctors and cultural mediators. This situation further delays the vulnerability assessment which is an integral part of the asylum procedure.

Food Security

- UNHCR provides food for the specific needs of the population in Kara Tepe on **Lesvos**.

Shelter, Water and Sanitation

- In Moria on **Lesvos**, some 2,000 people (out of 5,000 in total) are staying in tents or makeshift shelters as the reception centre is three times its capacity resulting in overcrowded and unhygienic conditions, especially for vulnerable people.
- With continuous new arrivals on **Chios** this month, the reception centre is hosting beyond its capacity. UNHCR assisted the Reception and Identification Service in developing a token system for residents to better access services in the reception centre.
- On **Samos**, some 2,000 people in the reception centre face inadequate shelter and hygiene facilities. The majority of toilet and shower amenities in the reception centre are out of order, worsening conditions and amplifying health risks.
- As direct arrivals to Dodecanese islands increased this month, the reception centre on **Kos** also surpassed its capacity, while frequent water cuts and insufficient wash facilities deteriorated conditions. Pressure has also increased in Lepida on **Leros**, while on **Rhodes**, a derelict building continues to host new arrivals, including the vulnerable.

Communication with Communities

- UNHCR, in coordination with site management authorities, convenes regular community discussions on the islands. These platforms serve as a dual channel of communication amongst asylum-seekers, humanitarian actors and authorities.

- UNHCR provides leaflets in different languages about the asylum procedures and access to key services.

Support to Local Communities

- UNHCR organizes events and implements projects that bring closer the refugee and local population and help build bridges of trust and mutual understanding.
- UNHCR donated to local schools on **Samos**, hosting refugee children, technological equipment and installed three digital whiteboards.

Accommodation and Cash assistance

- **Cash** assistance and **accommodation** support provide people with a sense of normalcy and contribute directly to the economy of the host community through the purchase of services and goods, and the renting of apartments.
- In May, some 1,330 people were accommodated by UNHCR in apartments on the islands.
- UNHCR works with the Government, local authorities and NGOs to provide urban accommodation and cash assistance to asylum-seekers and refugees through the ECHO-funded Emergency Support to Integration and Accommodation (**ESTIA**).

Logistics

- In May, UNHCR assisted the transfer of some 1,100 asylum-seekers from the islands to rented accommodation and Government-run sites on the mainland. Since January 2017, UNHCR has coordinated and covered the cost of some 23,600 such transfers which help alleviate the overcrowded conditions in the sites of the islands.
- UNHCR offers local transportation from remote sites to key facilities on the islands in order to ensure that asylum-seekers have access to the asylum procedure and the necessary services.

Returns

- Within the framework of the E.U. - Turkey Statement, 29 people were **returned** in May from Greece to Turkey. Since 20 March 2016, 1,630 people have been returned to Turkey.

Partners

- UNHCR on the islands works with international and national implementing partners in supporting the Government to manage the refugee situation: [International Rescue Committee](#), [Mercy Corps](#), [Doctors of the World](#), [Solidarity Now](#), [METAdrasi](#), [Arsis](#), [PRAKSIS](#) and [Iliaktida](#).

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Thanks to the donors for the Greece Operation

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

CONTACTS

Boris Cheshirkov, Associate Communications Officer (Islands), Greece
cheshirk@unhcr.org, Tel: +30 695 185 4661

Elena Marda, Liaison Associate (Islands), Greece
marda@unhcr.org, Tel: +30 695 18 01 242

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