

# Cyprus

15 February 2019

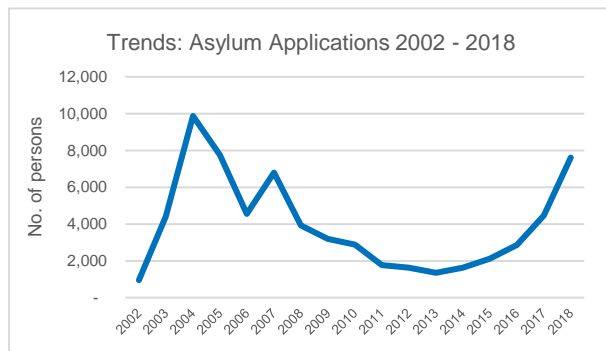
In **2002** the Government of the Republic of Cyprus (RoC) took over refugee protection responsibilities from UNHCR. Since 2002 till December 2018, **67,730** asylum applications have been submitted

in the RoC. Of these, **10,489** have been granted protection, while **10,186** are pending. Currently **84** refugees under UNHCR's mandate reside in the northern part of the island. Since 1998 there are **49** refugees and

asylum-seekers at the British Sovereign Base Areas. Some **220** unaccompanied / separated children applied for asylum in the RoC in 2016, another **221** in 2017 and **192** in 2018 (October).

## TRENDS

### Asylum Applications

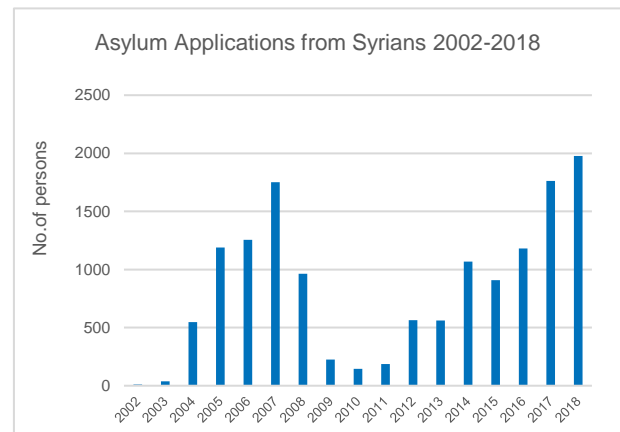


\*Top ten countries of origin of asylum-seekers in 2018 were Syria, India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Egypt, Vietnam, Iraq, Cameroon, Georgia and Sri Lanka.

\*\*Of the total numbers of applications received and processed between 2002 - October 2018, only 15% were accorded protection, with the vast majority being granted subsidiary protection.

## ASYLUM APPLICATIONS IN CYPRUS

### Syrians



\*In 2017-2018, the protection rate for Syrians was 55%, but only 2% received refugee status.

## UNHCR PRESENCE

### Staff:

- 1 International Staff
- 9 National Staff
- 1 Affiliated Staff

### Offices:

- 1 Office in Nicosia



World Refugee Day 2017 Street Festival in Nicosia. Most refugees and asylum-seekers in Cyprus live in urban settings.  
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## Working with Partners

**The Government of Cyprus** is UNHCR's key partner in its mission to ensure the protection of refugees and asylum-seekers in accordance with international and European Union standards. Over the years, UNHCR has strengthened its partnership with various Government ministries, especially those of the interior, foreign affairs, justice, education and labour and social affairs. UNHCR has also established constructive working relations and mutual co-operation with the relevant Parliamentary committees, the Ombudsman, the Office of the Child Commissioner, diplomatic missions, the media, and others.

**NGOs and civil society:** UNHCR has forged useful links with a number of local NGOs and other members of civil society. At present, UNHCR has a funding-based partnership agreement with two NGOs:

- **Cyprus Refugee Council** provides free legal and social advice to asylum-seekers and refugees in the Republic of Cyprus.  
Tel.: +357 22 205 959 | Fax: +357 22 205 960 | [info@cyrefugeecouncil.org](mailto:info@cyrefugeecouncil.org) |  
Website: [www.cyrefugeecouncil.org](http://www.cyrefugeecouncil.org) | FB: @cyrefugeecouncil
- **SOS Children's Village** is a Turkish Cypriot NGO helping UNHCR address the protection needs of asylum-seekers arriving in the northern part of the island.  
Tel.: +90 392 225 3347 | Fax: +90 392 225 3345 | [info@soscocukkoyu.org](mailto:info@soscocukkoyu.org) |  
Website: [www.soscocukkoyu.org](http://www.soscocukkoyu.org) | FB: @CocukSOS

## Main Activities

UNHCR's fundamental business in Cyprus is to assist the Government to further refine and improve its asylum legislation and the procedures and capacities for a refugee protection system fully in line with international standards. This requires that existing gaps and weaknesses in the national asylum legislation and practice are addressed; migration management policies incorporate protection safeguards; the refugee status determination procedures are further reformed to make them both fair and efficient; and programmes are put in place to help refugees find a durable solution by way of local integration. To achieve these objectives, UNHCR undertakes a number of activities:

### Legal advocacy and policy

- Monitoring and promoting respect for refugee rights and the standards of treatment of asylum-seekers, particularly as regards access to asylum procedures, reception conditions and detention.
- Influencing legislation affecting refugees and asylum-seekers by providing expert advice and comments on relevant draft laws to ensure compliance with international and EU standards.
- Providing technical assistance, legal advice and other forms of support to assist the authorities to further strengthen their refugee status determination procedures and ensure quality decision-making.
- Monitoring and advocacy to ensure that unaccompanied and separated children have effective access to the national child protection system with respect to accurate and timely identification, registration and documentation; guardianship and legal representation; adequate care and supervision; tracing and family reunification. Central to these actions is a best interest determination.

- Promoting good practices in relation to policies and measures that support the effective integration of refugees into the social, economic and cultural fabric of Cypriot society, including advocacy for naturalization, long-term residence permit and family reunification
- Promoting accession to the UN statelessness conventions.

### Protection outreach

- Training of key stakeholders from the government and civil society on basic protection issues, including refugee rights, reception conditions for asylum-seekers, durable solutions and child protection.
- Strengthening and broadening public information, awareness-raising and sensitization activities through media work, school activities, special campaigns, seminars and constituency-building.
- Strengthening partnerships with NGOs and other civil society actors involved in refugee protection.
- Implementation of the Refugee Outreach Volunteer Programme to enhance UNHCR's outreach to the refugee and asylum seeker community that is dispersed in urban settings throughout the country.



Printing date: 01 Oct 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.

### CONTACTS

**Emilia STROVOLIDOU**

Assistant Public Information Officer

Nicosia, CYPRUS

[strovoli@unhcr.org](mailto:strovoli@unhcr.org)

**Tel:** +357 22 359043

**Mobile:** +357 99 832614

### LINKS

**Country Office Website:**

[www.unhcr.org/cy](http://www.unhcr.org/cy)

**Social Media:**

**Facebook & Twitter @UNHCRCyprus**

**Recent Story:** *A loving family stays together, despite all obstacles and an asylum application still pending after 13 years* [<http://bit.ly/2SbQE38>]

**Operational Portal | Mediterranean Situation:**

<https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean>