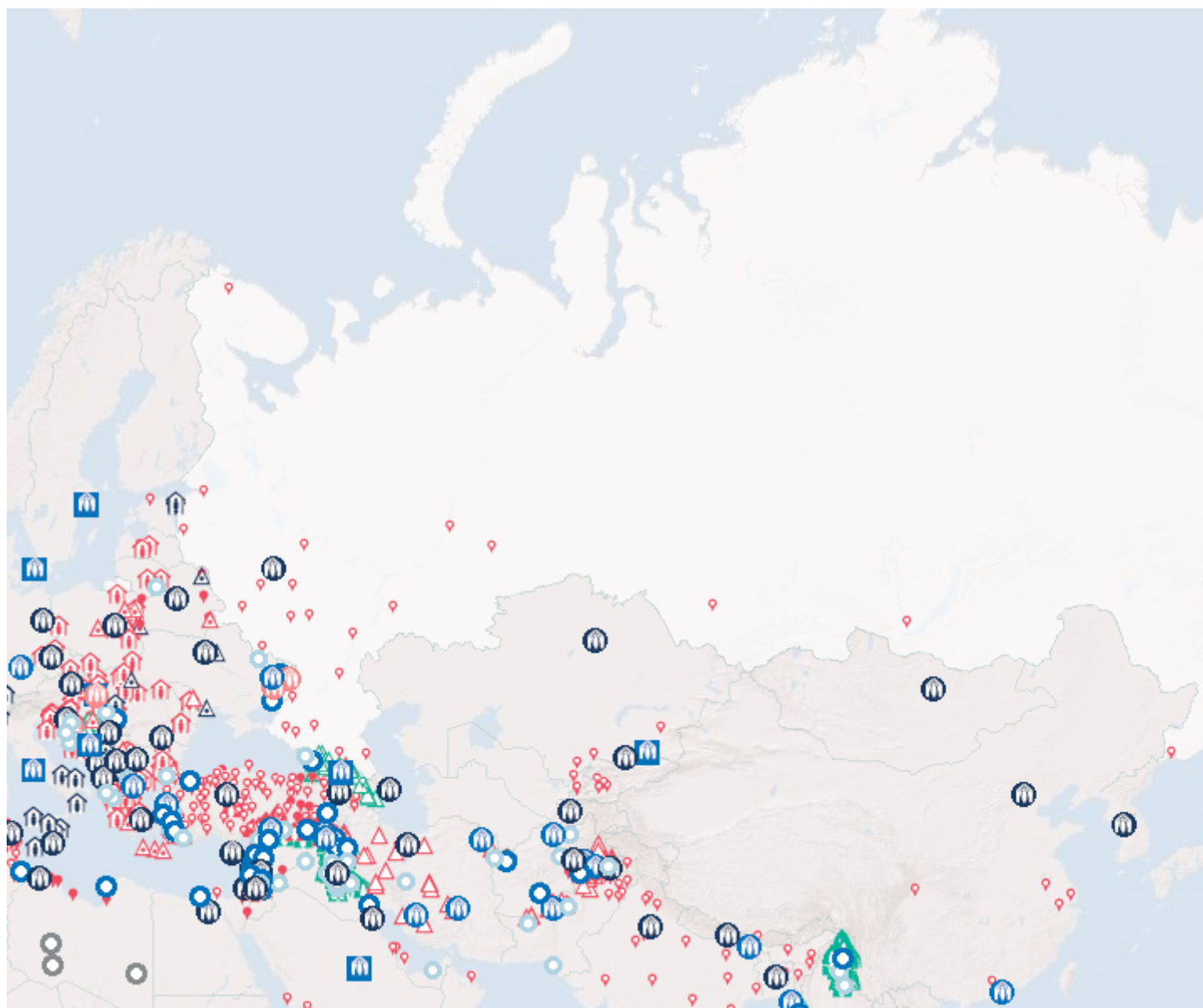


## Operation: Russian Federation



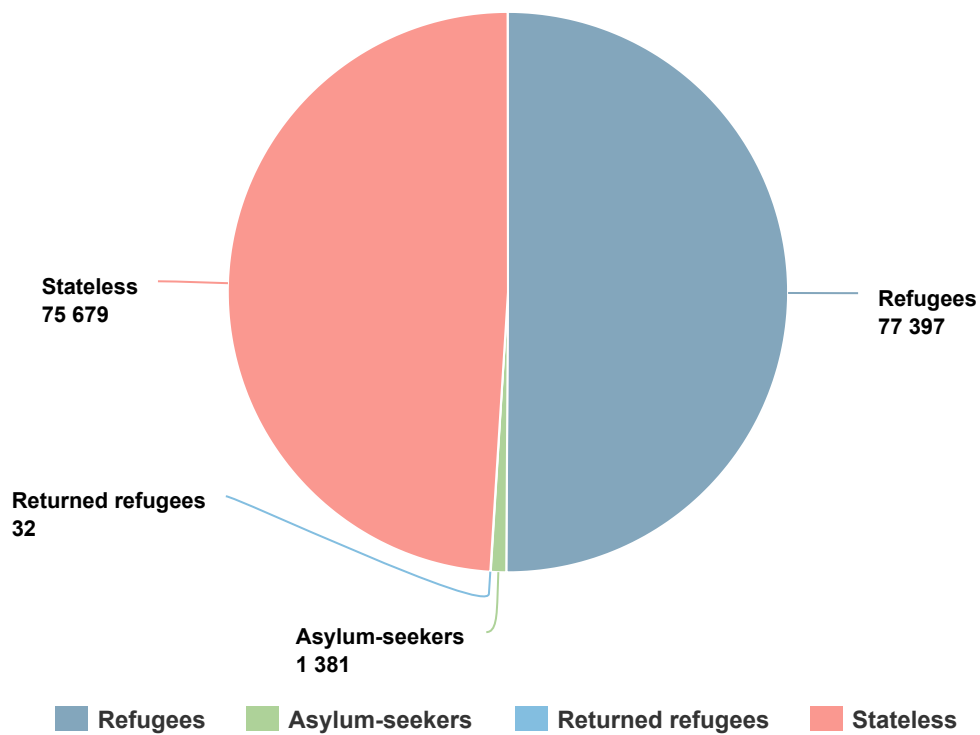
# People of Concern

DECREASE IN  
**27%** 2018

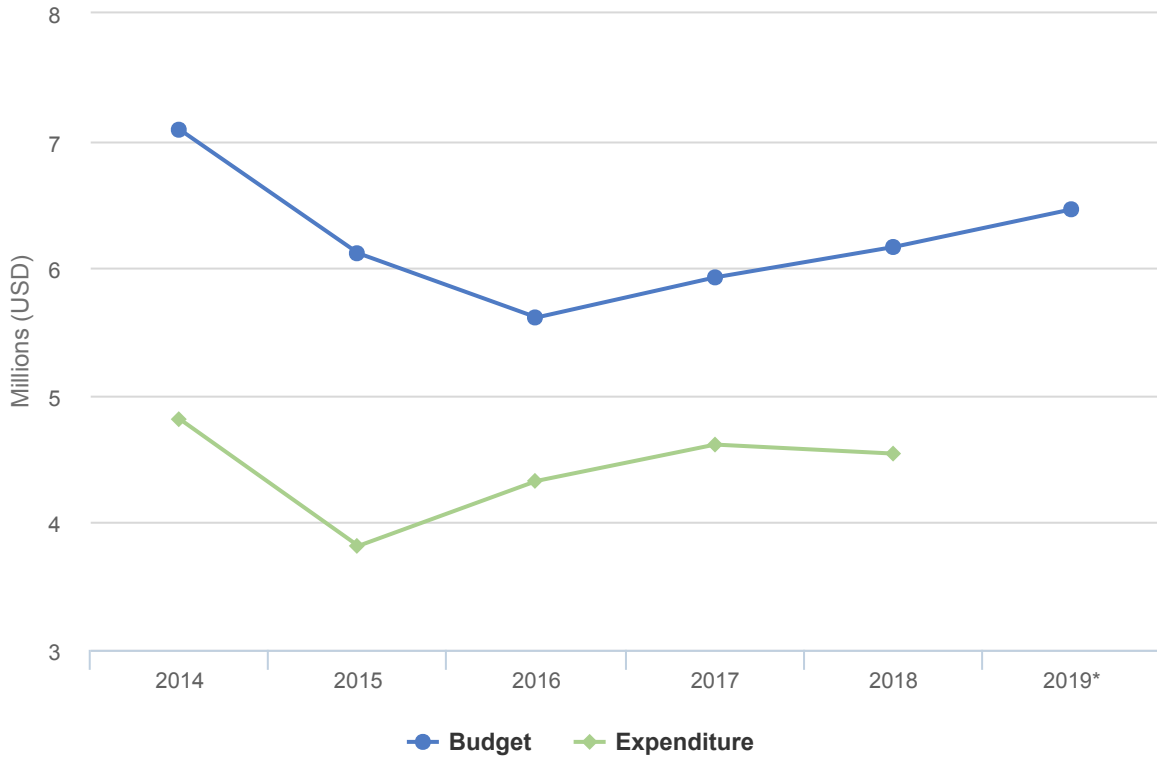
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<b>2018</b>	154,489
<b>2017</b>	210,389
<b>2016</b>	322,856

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# Budgets and Expenditure for Russian Federation



## Operational environment

In the Russian Federation, the Ministry of Interior (MOI) fully assumes the functions of the abolished Federal Migration Service regarding all aspects of migration and asylum. The size of the country and the decentralized MOI structures in the regions, across 11 time zones, renders UNHCR engagement complex and uneven.

Asylum-seekers who entered irregularly the Russian Federation or overstayed their visa are often penalized. Persons in contravention with the provisions of the migration regime are frequently prosecuted before their asylum application is considered.

The President of the Russian Federation signed on 31 October 2018 a new *Concept of the State Migration Policy for 2019-2025*, which superseded the existing one drafted for the period 2012-2025. One of the aims of the new migration policy is to facilitate interaction across different ethnic groups, including migrants and refugees. The policy also foresees the development of institutes for the social and cultural adaptation/orientation of migrants, the establishment of simplified mechanisms for the issuance of visas and a number of options to obtain a residence permit or citizenship.

UNHCR's protection interventions are focused on the provision of quality legal assistance through partners (including litigation) to ensure access to asylum procedures, rights and solutions, naturalization procedure for refugees and stateless persons, as well as the development of fair status determination and prevention of refoulement. UNHCR's and its partners assisted asylum-seekers, Temporary Asylum (TA) holders and refugees in accessing asylum procedures and enjoy their rights.

## Population trends

On 31 December 2018, according to the Russian Federation official statistics, there were close to 255,400 people of concern to UNHCR, including 570 refugees (including 140 non-Ukrainians), some 76,830 TA Holders (including 1,820 non-Ukrainians), and 178,000 stateless persons. Amongst these groups, 30 individuals were granted refugee status and some 6,010 Temporary Asylum (TA) in 2018.

The results of the 2010 all-country census revealed that 178,000 persons identified themselves as stateless but their actual legal status was never verified. The Ministry of Interior only keeps data of those who approached its territorial branches and obtained either permission for temporary stay or residence permits. UNHCR estimated that as of 2018 some 75,680 stateless persons are living in the Russian Federation.

## Key achievements

Through its partners, UNHCR ensured access to free of charge legal aid for asylum-seekers and stateless persons in 37 counselling points across 34 regions of the Russian Federation.

An inter-agency Working Group on Employment was formed in 2018 to raise awareness of employers regarding refugees' rights to access employment. Discussions were also initiated with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Moscow and Moscow region to identify ways to improve access to employment.

UNHCR continued to facilitate the release and legalization of stateless persons, including from the 22 pre-removal detention centres. The Ministry of Interior supported and facilitated UNHCR's involvement in helping stateless persons in detention. As a result, 331 stateless persons were assisted with obtaining permission for temporary stay,

residence permits and citizenship and 70 were released from detention.

The successful cooperation on asylum and stateless laws with educational establishments was further developed, with an emphasis on increasing awareness and practical skills of students engaged in the work of legal clinics supporting UNHCR's persons of concern

## **Unmet needs**

In the absence of a pro-bono legal aid system for people of concern, additional funding would enable an increase of the geographic coverage of free legal aid. It would also allow provision of socio-economic assistance to more persons of concern, pending the outcome of the asylum procedures and identification of solutions.

Lack of shelters for people with specific needs such as LGBTI or survivors of SGBV is a serious challenge. The state-provided shelters, which are very few, accommodate only Russian citizens or foreigners with legal status and residence registration in Moscow. Apart from a few church-ran shelters that serve the most marginalized, there are no options for adult persons of concern. Accommodation in the state-ran Temporary Accommodation Centres in remote locations is available by law only for a limited number of people of concern with vulnerable profiles.

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