

Russian Federation

March 2018

Since its opening in 1992, UNHCR Moscow has been working with the Government to find a permanent solution to the problem of asylum-seekers, refugees and stateless persons.

UNHCR fulfils this function through providing expert advice, trainings and supporting a number of projects with partner organisations, aimed at assisting persons of concern through legal counselling and social support, with particular focus on persons with special needs.

Russia joined the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees in 1992.

UNHCR presence in RF

17 local staff
4 international staff

REFUGEE STATUS HOLDERS

592

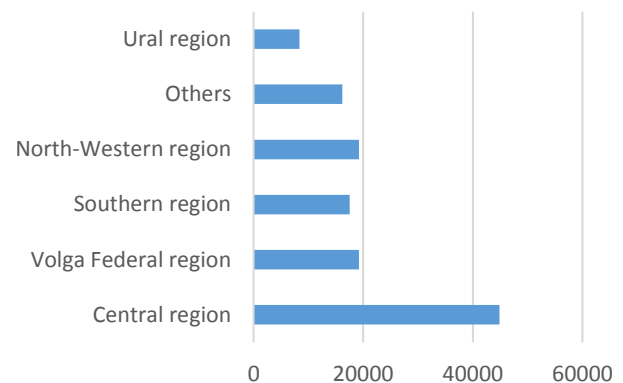
TEMPORARY ASYLUM (TA) STATUS HOLDERS

125 442

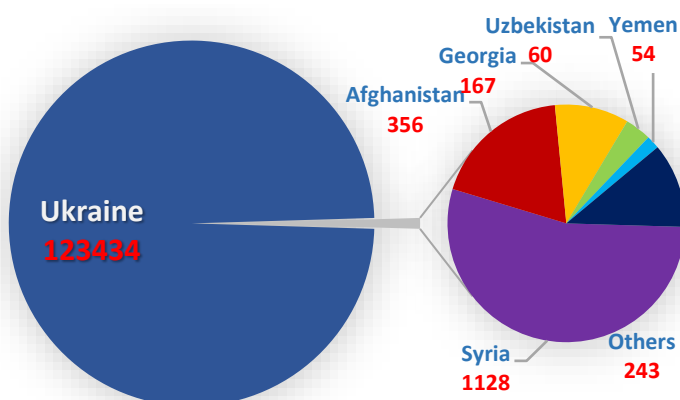
STATELESS PERSONS

178 000**, 5177 received temporary and permanent residence permit in RF (as of July 1) in 2017

TA STATUS HOLDERS BY GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION IN RF



TA STATUS HOLDERS BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN*



PROTECTION OF REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

UNHCR advocated with the RF competent authorities to promote the rights of asylum-seekers, such as access to the asylum procedure, including at borders, international airports and pre-removal detention facilities;

UNHCR ensures individual legal assistance and consultations through partner organizations and independent lawyers (in the course of 2017 over 7900 PoCs received legal counselling from UNHCR and partners). When necessary, UNHCR supports judicial engagement in individual cases before national courts, and in selected cases with the European Court for Human Rights;

UNHCR intervenes to prevent *refoulement* of asylum-seekers to countries where their lives may be at risk (161 in 2017).

PROTECTION OF STATELESS PERSONS

Under the statelessness mandate conferred by the UN General Assembly, UNHCR:

- regularly informs competent agencies about known stateless individuals and, through partner organizations, provides legal assistance to stateless persons and those with undetermined status (1,779 in 2017);
- lobbies for accession of the Russian Federation to the two UN Conventions on statelessness;
- takes part in the UNHCR's global campaign for the eradication of statelessness; disseminates information materials and collaborates with media throughout the country.

DURABLE SOLUTIONS

Voluntary repatriation is a preferred durable solution when individuals are able to return to their country of origin in safety and dignity. In 2017, UNHCR provided assistance with documents and visas, airfare and a small financial grant to eight persons returning to their homelands (Somalia, Iraq, CAR, Bangladesh and DRC).

Contrary to the situation of refugees from Ukraine, **local integration** is rather limited for other groups. UNHCR supports the Refugee Integration Centre, which operates at the premises of the St. Petersburg branch of the Russian Red Cross. The Centre offers Russian language classes for adults and children, computer literacy courses, preparation of high school seniors for the graduation exam, as well as lectures and seminars on social and legal issues.

In Moscow and St. Petersburg, selected female refugees and asylum-seekers successfully completed professional training courses (sewing, hairdressing, nail service and nursing).

Moscow's "Health and Life" Foundation conducts Russian language courses for refugees from Afghanistan and African countries. With the support of UNHCR, the Civic Assistance Committee is running an integration project for persons from Syria in the Moscow region, providing Russian language courses for adults and children and assisting the PoC with placement to local schools.

Some 45 persons in Moscow, 52 persons in the Moscow region and 47 persons in St. Petersburg have completed Russian language courses.

UNHCR supports partner NGO projects to help refugee children gain admission to local schools (59 children in Moscow and Moscow region in 2017).

Resettlement to third countries is pursued when refugees, for various reasons, cannot enjoy protection and achieve integration in the Russian Federation. In 2017, 86 cases/111 persons were submitted for resettlement to other countries.

DAFI

UNHCR assists talented young refugees with enrolling in colleges and universities through DAFI, a German-funded scholarship program. During the past 20 years, over 200 refugee students received higher education in Russia through this programme.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

By law, applicants for the refugee status, holders of TA and refugee status in the Russian Federation are entitled to free medical care. UNHCR, directly and through its partner organizations in Moscow, assists eligible individuals with accessing the obligatory state medical insurance. We also support a medical assistance programme for persons of concern who lack legal status and have serious health issues. In 2017, over 1500 persons received medical consultations and/or treatment and medicines. About 100 persons received psychological assistance. For the most vulnerable cases, such as women with children and people with health problems, UNHCR, through its partners, offers limited financial assistance. In 2017, over 800 persons benefited from this form of assistance.

WORKING WITH PARTNERS

UNHCR works with over 30 partners, including national NGOs, governmental agencies, international non-governmental organizations (ICRC, IFRC) and UN agencies. Local non-governmental partners include: "Memorial" Human Rights Centre; "Civic Assistance" Committee; Inter-Regional Public Charitable Organization "Faith, Hope and Love"; "Health and Life" Charitable Foundation; St. Petersburg branch of the Russian Red Cross; Centre for International Cooperation of the St. Petersburg Red Cross, Children's Fund of North Ossetia and Human Rights Institute. UNHCR is a member of UN Team in Russia and UN Thematic Group on gender issues. UNHCR is an observer of the Working Group on Asylum of the CIS Collective Security Treaty Organisation.

CAPACITY BUILDING WITH PARTNERS

- For its NGO partners, UNHCR conducts expert meetings on international protection standards, interviewing techniques, working with vulnerable cases, identification of durable solutions for refugees and other issues;
- organizes information workshops for partner NGOs and regional Ombudsmen;
- in the framework of cooperation with universities – holds various events for students and professors on Refugee Law, organizes internships in the office, and provides methodological support to legal clinics in order to expand potential sources of free legal aid for persons of concern;
- advises partners on fundraising in the changing funding environment for the projects.