

Greece

This month 530 people arrived by land and 1,300 by sea.

Conditions in some island reception centres improved slightly as a result of authorities' increased measures, reduced

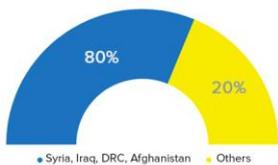
arrivals and ongoing transfers of those authorized to mainland sites and apartments. There, **UNHCR provides 22,000 places** in rented housing through municipalities and NGOs. However, protection

risks remain high for those on the islands. This includes the risk of sexual violence, particularly for women and children. [UNHCR urged action with specific measures.](#)

50,800 refugees and migrants in Greece¹

39,800 in the mainland

11,000 on the islands



80% of arrivals in 2018 are from Syria, Iraq, DRC and Afghanistan

¹UNHCR estimates as of 28 February 2018 of those who arrived and remained since the 2015 – 2016 mass flow

41,400 eligible people received cash assistance from UNHCR this month

43,800 people have so far benefited from UNHCR accommodation, since the start of the programme in November 2015

23,900 people transferred from the islands to the mainland (UNHCR supported), between June 2016 and February 2018

UNHCR PRESENCE

Staff:

407 National Staff

55 International Staff

Offices:

1 Country Office in Athens

3 Mainland Offices in Attika, Thessaloniki, Ioannina

6 Island Offices in Lesbos, Chios, Samos, Leros, Kos, and Rhodes



Asylum-seekers face overcrowded conditions at the reception centre of Vathy, Samos Island, Greece.

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

- Cash assistance restores dignity and empowers asylum-seekers and refugees who can choose how to cover their basic needs. It also contributes directly to the economy of the host community through the purchase of services and goods. This month, 41,387 people received cash assistance from UNHCR.
- By the end of February, UNHCR had created 22,049 places to house asylum-seekers in rented accommodation. Urban accommodation provides people with a sense of normalcy and facilitates their access to services and education. It also facilitates the eventual integration of those who will remain in Greece. Additionally, the host population benefits from the renting of their apartments. So far, 43,798 people have benefited from UNHCR's accommodation in Greece 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

- To alleviate the overcrowded conditions in the Reception and Identification Centres (RICs) of the Aegean islands, UNHCR continued to support the Ministry of Migration Policy (MoMP) transfer authorized asylum-seekers to State-run sites or urban accommodation in the mainland and Crete to pursue their asylum applications.
- This month UNHCR supported the MoMP transfer 847 asylum-seekers from Samos (413), Lesbos (245), Chios (123), Kos (58), Leros (4), and other islands (4). A total of 23,937 people have been assisted with transfers from the islands to the mainland since June 2016.
- UNHCR continued to provide legal aid through partners to asylum-seekers and beneficiaries of international protection. By February 2018, the Greek Council for Refugees, Ecumenical Refugee Program and METAdrasi had provided legal assistance in the form of counselling and representation to nearly 2,850 asylum-seekers and beneficiaries of international protection in sites, urban areas as well as in detention. The legal aid covers asylum procedures, family reunification, child protection, protection of SGBV survivors, other relevant administrative procedures and access to rights.

- METAdrasi and GCR provide legal assistance at the appeal stage of the asylum procedure in the framework of UNHCR's Memorandum of Cooperation with the MoMP. Over 5,800 appellants benefited from free legal assistance at second instance between 15 July 2016 and February 2018, of whom 3,600 in 2017 and 229 in 2018.
- UNHCR supports the Asylum Service by helping upon request caseworkers with on-the-job training and advice on drafting decisions and conducting interviews. This month UNHCR assisted in over 900 instances.

Child Protection

- The 3,030 unaccompanied children in Greece exceed the number of available places in shelters which stand at 1,118 (Source: National Centre of Social Solidarity (EKKA), 28 February 2018). As a result, children risk spending extended periods in the reception and identification centres (RICs) and in protective custody.
- In response, UNHCR and partners are working with the authorities to develop diverse alternative care arrangements. This includes family-based foster care for younger children, and Supported Independent Living (SIL) for older adolescents where they will be assisted by dedicated guardians and support teams.
- 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 which is often challenging and represents particular risks and concerns.
- UNHCR 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 coordinates with humanitarian actors and stakeholders to monitor and develop Standard Operating Procedures to ensure minimum standards for child protection.
- Additionally, 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, seven children have departed in the framework of the Scheme.
- UNHCR facilitated through partner METAdrasi the transfer of 243 unaccompanied children from the islands' RICs and detention centres to the mainland since January.
- UNHCR supports the identification of children at risk and assists in building the expertise of national and local actors.
- Finally, 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.

Prevention and Response to Sexual and Gender-based Violence

- The overcrowded conditions in the reception centres of the islands and poor conditions in some mainland sites translate into poor shelter allocation. This leads to a lack of privacy and compromises safe access to WASH facilities, thus heightening the risk of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).

- UNHCR refers women at risk or survivors of violence to State services and shelters where available, or urban accommodation. However, the lack of interpretation in State services limits refugees' access to them.
- UNHCR and partners have developed standard operating procedures for SGBV-prevention and response and referral pathways for different locations hosting refugees so that survivors receive the support they need.
- On the islands UNHCR works by identifying survivors and people at risk, offering legal information and counselling and referring them to appropriate services also through partners MdM and GCR. Limited services in some of the RICs however means that timely access to them is not always possible. [UNHCR called](#) for further measures to mitigate the risk of SGBV on the islands and to improve response.
- In the mainland, UNHCR works through national NGOs, the DIOTIMA-Centre for Research on Women Issues, GCR and Arsis to prevent and respond to SGBV in sites in the mainland and urban locations in Athens and Thessaloniki.
- UNHCR also raises awareness and conducts trainings for national and non-Governmental actors.

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 their learning Greek as 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.
- UNHCR's sensitization activities for the local society contribute to a safe school environment.

Health

- UNHCR works to ameliorate refugees' and asylum-seekers' access to healthcare, working closely with the Ministry of Health, KEELPNO and other partners. A particular problem are the limited public mental health institutions in Greece. To that end, UNHCR works with partners to identify alternative referral pathways to direct those who are affected by mental health issues to public institutions.
- UNHCR began collaborating with the Association for Regional Development and Mental Health, EPAPSY, on a pilot project in Athens. The project will provide long-term support to 30 people in accommodation and short hospitalization for those requiring intensive care. It also includes the mapping of mental health services and development of referral pathways for refugees and asylum-seekers with serious conditions, as well as the capacity building of relevant State authorities and NGOs.
- 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 policlinic of the municipality of Athens.

Durable Solutions

- The enhanced capacity of the Asylum Service in Greece have translated into an accelerated rate for the granting of status to those in need of international protection. In 2017, 10,364 people received refugee status or subsidiary protection. As such, 20 per cent more people received international protection in 2017 than in the entire period between June 2013 and December 2016 (8,732).
- 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 on the same terms and conditions as Greek nationals.
- To facilitate this transition, UNHCR with the Government and relevant 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 February 2018, some 3,100 beneficiaries of international protection were provided accommodation in apartments through UNHCR's Scheme, and 6,000 received cash assistance.

Relocation and Returns

- The relocation programme from Greece to other EU Member States has concluded with some 21,818 people having departed from Greece.
- This month, 23 people were returned from Greece to Turkey in the framework of the E.U. - Turkey Statement. Since 20 March 2016, 1,554 people have been returned to Turkey.

Logistics

- Many of the sites in the mainland are remote from services and public transportation. UNHCR ensures this does not hinder people's access to the Asylum Service or other services and provided transportation to some 4,800 people around Greece in February.

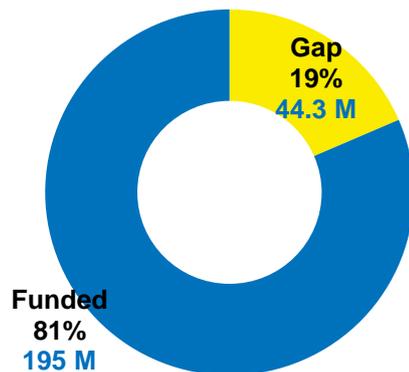
Partners

In February, UNHCR worked through 32 partners on Accommodation with ARSIS, Iliaktida, Intersos, NOSTOS, Praksis, Solidarity Now, Catholic Relief Services and Local Authorities of Athens, Thessaloniki, Livadia, Crete, Trikala, Nea Filadelfia – Nea Chalkidona, Karditsa, Larissa and Tripoli; on Cash Assistance with Catholic Relief Services, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and Mercy Corps; Legal Aid with Ecumenical Refugee Program and Greek Council for Refugees; on Child Protection with ARSIS, METAdrasi, Network for Children's Rights, and Praksis; on PwSN with ARSIS, Doctors of the World and National Confederation of Disabled People; on prevention and response to SGBV with Diotima; on Peaceful Coexistence and integration activities with Solidarity Now, ARSIS, Faros, Greek Council for Refugees, Intersos, and KEAN; on Site Management Support (SMS) with International Rescue Committee; on Interpretation Services and Messaging with METAdrasi; on Awareness raising activities with the Hellenic Theatre/Drama & Education Network (TENet); on capacity building with the Reception and Identification Service; and on the deployment of affiliate workforce with UNOPS and International Catholic Migration Commission.

FUNDING (AS OF 7 MARCH 2018)

USD 239.3 M

requested for the Greece operation



Donors

Special thanks to the major donors of unrestricted and regional funds

Sweden (98 M) | Norway (43 M) | Netherlands (39 M) | United Kingdom (32 M) | Denmark (25 M) | Australia (19 M) | Switzerland (15 M) | Private Donors Spain (13 M) | Italy (11 M)

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Thanks to the donors for the Greece Operation

European Union (195 M)

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