

SERBIA MONTHLY UPDATE

The number of **observed arrivals somewhat decreased counting 1,649** (from 2,703 in October): 74% arrived from North Macedonia, 16% from Albania (through Kosovo¹), 5% from Montenegro and smaller numbers from Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Bulgaria, Hungary, etc.; three persons arrived by air from Turkey. 66% originated from Afghanistan, 17% from Syria, 4% from Pakistan, etc.; 82% were adult males, 3% women and 15% children, including 162 UASC (comp. to 279 in October). **In Jan-Nov 2020, 24,180 new refugees and migrants have been observed to have arrived in Serbia.**

Eight new cases of Covid-19 amongst the refugees/migrants were reported in November, luckily without casualties, bringing the total number of cases recorded since March to 17. With additional amounts of PPE and disinfectants, also bed linen, procured for and delivered to SCRM and Vranje hospital.

Ninety-seven intentions to seek asylum were registered in November (compared to 173 in October) and **seven persons applied for asylum** (20 in October). The **Asylum Office (AO)** adjudicated on 14 asylum applications by granting refugee status to one person and subsidiary protection to three (represented by UNHCR project lawyers), and by rejecting applications of another 10 persons. **By end-November, AO has granted international protection in Serbia to 34 persons** (16 have been granted asylum and 18 subsidiary protection) in 2020.

Serbian public was touched by the story of K.M. - Syrian man accommodated in Sombor Reception/Transit Centre (RTC), who initiated a money collection amongst Arabic-speaking residents of this RTC for Serbian children who suffer from rare illnesses which require expensive treatments abroad. Like a domino effect, this initiative spread amongst all residents of Sombor, Kikinda and Obrenovac RTCs and Krnjača and Tutin Asylum Centres (AC), with the positive media carrying the story under the title „[Migrants collecting money for treatment of children from Serbia](#)“.



Children in Sombor RTC sending their love to ill children in Serbia, ©UNHCR, Nov 2020

Partner Belgrade Centre for Human Rights (BCHR) published their periodic report on [Right to Asylum in the Republic of Serbia for July-September 2020](#).

The number of persons pushed back from neighbouring countries in November – counting 3,467– again, like in October, by far exceeds the number of monthly arrivals.

The number of residents in Asylum or Reception/Transit Centres, again increased by 10% to **6,938** at the end of the month. They comprised 3,217 citizens of Afghanistan, 1,526 of Syria, 382 of Pakistan, 322 of Bangladesh, 291 of Morocco and 1,200 from 48 other countries. 5,984 are adult men, 272 adult women and 682 children, including 259 UASC. With increased movement towards the EU borders, especially Romania and Hungary, avoidance of Covid-prevention isolation measures in centres and fear of another lockdown, the number of foreigners observed **staying rough** again increased by 48% to **2,200** in the middle of the month. **A total of 8,609 new refugees and migrants were counted to be present in the country at end-November.**

In order to decrease the number of refugees/migrants staying outside of government centres and to decrease the pressure on overflowing centres in the north and the west, the authorities engaged in three coordinated police actions which resulted in 1,650 persons transported and accommodated in the centres with more vacancies in the south(-east) of the country.

According to available information, **151 refugee and migrant children were attending 28 schools in Serbia**, of which 130 were attending primary (65% of all children of primary school age), 16 are attending secondary schools (5% of all children of secondary school age - over 14s) and five are attending pre-school); 85% were attending classes online and 15% in person. UNHCR/IDEAS

¹ All reference to Kosovo should be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244.

distributed **15 cash cards to UASC students** in Belgrade Krnjača AC, and procured hygiene materials for the UASC home in Loznica, shoes for children in Zmaj UASC institution and workshop materials for UASC in Krnjača AC.

UNHCR currently supports **71 refugees and asylum-seekers with cash-based assistance**, and will also provide a one-off winterization assistance, during pandemic circumstances when jobs for refugees are scarce and are also being lost due to Covid-19. Partner BCHR obtained 5 ID cards and 7 work permits for asylum-seekers and refugees. **On 20 November, the BCHR integration team submitted to Mol once again the requests for issuance of travel documents for 24 refugees.** Partners Crisis Response and Policy Centre (CRPC) and BCHR supported integration of 40 refugees and asylum-seekers by providing Serbian language lessons and facilitating access to employment options, education, personal documents, private accommodation, etc.

UNHCR/IDEAS organized a meeting with the Office of the Ombudsman for UASC Peer Educators who thus familiarized themselves with this institution and related referral rules and mechanisms, as well as a workshop regarding prevention of human trafficking and smuggling. Partner DRC organised six Awareness-Raising Workshops on Sexually Transmitted Infections and Other Epidemiological Topics (incl. COVID-19) for UASC peer educators in Belgrade and in Bogovada AC. On the occasion of the International Day on the Elimination of Violence against Women, DRC launched a series of workshops in the Womens' Safe Space in Krnjača AC with the aim to raise awareness of gender equality.



Regional **Housing Programme (RHP) Steering Committee** met on 19 Nov, when partner countries in the RHP provided updates on RHP implementation progress (challenges, expectations, sustainability measures, activities on the critical path for the June 2022 deadline). UNHCR and the OSCE provided a review of the beneficiary selection and sustainability process, including on the Sustainability Study for the Republic of Serbia supported by both the OSCE and the UNHCR.

Partner A11 Initiative visited a Roma settlement in Vršac on 26 Nov, and supported 47 Roma IDPs in accessing housing solutions, social welfare and other means of state support. Partners A11 and Praxis visited nine Roma settlements throughout Serbia and provided information, counselling or legal assistance to a total of 89 Roma IDPs. Another 113 Roma were counselled by phone; **two persons thus had their nationality granted or confirmed in November and 21 were supported in obtaining personal documents.** Partner Praxis organised two workshops with 38 Roma and non-Roma children on **child, early and forced marriages.**

Partner International Aid Network (IAN) conducted one community support training with 17 UASC in Bogovada AC, tackling self-support, peer support and group support, abuse of psychoactive substances and harm reduction, children's rights and gender-based violence. Partner Psychological Innovation Network (PIN) supported 169 asylum-seekers and refugees (incl. 14 UASC) with **individual and group psychological assistance**, also their self-reliance and integration, and performed **four psychological assessments for the purpose of asylum procedure.** PIN's study on the latent structure of secondary traumatization, its precursors, and effects on the mental health of professionals working with refugees and asylum-seekers, supported by UNHCR, was [published in a reputable international journal PLoS ONE](#).

Partner Indigo organized 38 non-formal educational and 60 outdoor recreational activities, eight creative workshops, five movie projections, nine PS workshops for children and UASC and one PS workshop for parents and 35 community-based workshops in six government centres in the south and the east and Niš UASC Institute. UNHCR/CRPC/LDS Charities organised educational, arts & crafts workshops with UASC in Bogovada AC.

On the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women 25 November, partner Praxis prepared and published on social networks [a short video](#) on child, early and forced marriages. Partner IDEAS published a series of [Newsletters on child protection](#) and the Coalition for protection of refugee & migrant children issued a [Press Release](#) on the occasion of International Day for Tolerance 16 November.

UNHCR Serbia compiled and produced the [Serbia Statistical Snapshot October 2020](#) and the [Serbia Update October 2020](#).

UNHCR Serbia is grateful for the support of:

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