Greece

February 2021

Greece has progressed significantly in its asylum and reception systems since 2015, with UN and others' support. Work is now needed to help refugees integrate effectively in Greece.

UNHCR promotes refugees' self-reliance by empowering refugee communities, through expert advice to the Government, **integration** projects, and close work with trusted partners like municipalities.

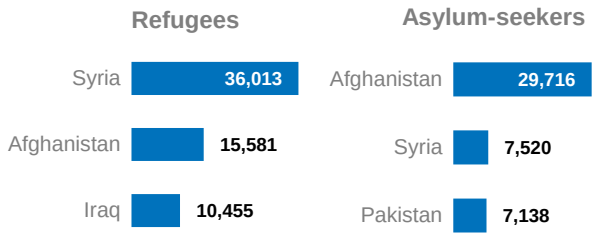
Alarmed **at the increasing reports of informal returns and pushbacks** of new arrivals on land and sea, UNHCR calls on the authorities to investigate reports and ensure access to asylum.

POPULATION OF CONCERN

Refugees	**91,945**
Asylum-seekers	**80,784**
Other of concern	**4,734**

The refugee population of concern represents people recognized as refugees by Greece, while the actual number present in Greece may be lower.

TOP THREE COUNTRES OF ORIGIN



Data source: UNHCR 2020 Mid-Year Statistical report and UNHCR data finder platform.

COVID-19 PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

Inclusion of persons of concern: Asylum-seekers and refugees are included in Greece's vaccination plan.

Communication with Communities: UNHCR helps provide asylum-seekers with quality information on preventive and Governmental measures via helplines and interpretation.

Health: UNHCR helped establishing screening, isolation and quarantine medical units near reception centres on the islands and Evros and for new arrivals. Unfortunately, the shortage of medical staff challenges the response. UNHCR also provides personal protective equipment to hospitals on the islands and Evros.

UNHCR transferred over 2,100 immuno-compromised individuals from overcrowded island centres to safer accommodation; strengthened water and sanitation capacity in the island centres and delivered to asylum-seekers essential hygiene and relief items.

HIGHLIGHTS

67,000
asylum-seekers received cash assistance from UNHCR this month.

3,060
asylum-seekers and refugees relocated to other European States with UN and European support since April 2020.

Greece abolished the detention of unaccompanied children as a means of protective custody in December 2020.

UNHCR scaled up assistance to the 12,000 asylum-seekers and refugees who were left homeless after the Moria fires in September 2020.

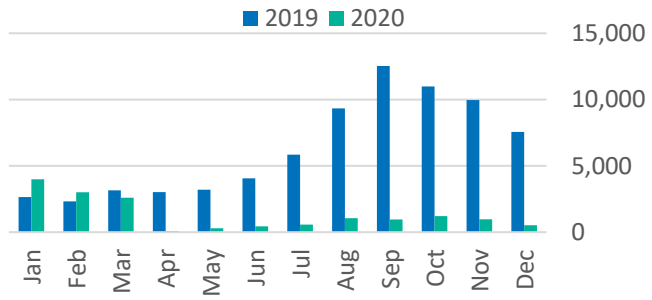
Compassion creates a new home for a refugee child

Iro and Nahal enjoy reading together. The little girl has completed two years in the arms of Iro and together, they have built a new family. You may click here to read more about the foster care programme.

Key Priorities

- **Institution building:** UNHCR pilots good practices, deploys staff and provides trainings and advice to help the State build systems and expertise on asylum, reception and solutions.
- **Access to territory:** UNHCR staff are at border locations to help new arrivals who need special assistance. A key priority for UNHCR is that those seeking asylum can access fair reception procedures.
- **Asylum procedures:** UNHCR promotes quality in asylum processing through deployed experts to the Asylum Service and offers legal aid through partners.
- **Advocacy:** UNHCR raises with the authorities and key actors critical matters that affect the rights and well-being of refugees and asylum-seekers in Greece so as to trigger legal and policy change.
- **Reception:** UNHCR helps Greece implement the EU Directive on reception conditions by providing housing and cash assistance to asylum-seekers. These will fully transition to the Government in 2021.
- **Relocation:** UNHCR supports the relocation of unaccompanied children and other vulnerable groups from Greece to other European States.
- **Integration:** UNHCR advises the State to ensure that refugees have in-practice access to rights. UNHCR runs projects to help refugees' integration and supports municipalities to lead in the inclusion of refugees in their communities.
- **Persons with specific needs:** To those most at-risk, such as unaccompanied children or survivors of sexual violence, UNHCR provides psychosocial support, emergency shelter and/or foster care.
- **Community empowerment and self-reliance:** UNHCR mobilizes refugees to create support networks, from offering schooling in camps to addressing mental health issues.
- **Emergency support:** UNHCR assisted the State after the Moria fires and helps address key gaps to improve conditions.

MONTHLY ARRIVALS TO GREECE



Working with Partners

- UNHCR supports the Government, which leads the refugee response, and works with State and EU institutions and municipalities, UN agencies, international and local NGOs, refugee and local communities.
- **External Engagement:** UNHCR works to raise awareness among the host population and generate empathy for refugees.
- UNHCR promotes an understanding on the situation in Greece and cultivates partnerships to mobilize wider support.

Statelessness

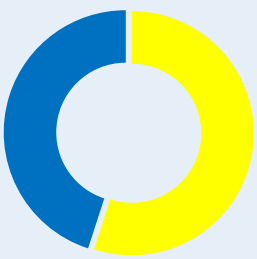
- Greece has acceded to the 1954 Statelessness Convention but has yet to accede to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness
- UNHCR helps Greece establish a statelessness determination procedure. UNHCR also deploys staff and offers expertise to collect and review data and implement legislation on acquiring Greek citizenship.

UNHCR Presence in Greece

Staff:	**Offices:**
230 National Staff	1 Country Office in Athens
28 International Staff	3 Field Offices on Kos, Chios and Samos
	2 Sub Offices in Thessaloniki and Lesvos
	1 Field Unit in Evros

Financial information 28 February 2021

Financial Requirements:
USD 150.5 M



Funded
45%
68,2 M

Funding gap
55%
82,3 M

UNHCR is grateful to the major donors of unearmarked contributions* to the 2021 global programmes (USD, as of 28 February 2021):

Norway 80 M | Sweden 66.9 M | Netherlands 36.1 M | Denmark 34.6 M | Germany 22.1 M | Switzerland 16.4 M | Private donors Spain 13.3 M | Ireland 12.5 M | Belgium 11.9 M

*Unearmarked contributions provide UNHCR critical flexibility to best reach populations of concern in the greatest need and at the greatest risk. Above are donors of USD 10 million or more.

UNHCR Greece is also grateful for 2021 contributions from the following donors (as of 28 February):

European Union | Austria | UNO-Flüchtlingshilfe | SAP (UK) Ltd. | Education Cannot Wait