

Montenegro

February 2021

At the GRF in 2019, Montenegro pledged to harmonize its asylum system with EU standards, increase reception capacities, foster refugee integration and [support regional reinforcement of asylum](#).

At the 2019 ExCom High-Level Segment on Statelessness, Montenegro pledged to [end statelessness by 2024](#) and resolve the legal status of all refugees from former Yugoslavia with unstable legal status.

Montenegro is a regional [front-runner in EU accession](#), albeit with pending comprehensive reforms in key areas, including those affecting persons of concern (Chapters 23 and 24).

POPULATION OF CONCERN

Refugees	196
Asylum-seekers	210
Stateless people	135
Others of concern	12,258

TOP THREE COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN

	Refugees		Asylum-seekers
SRB	149	MOR	65
BSN	12	IRN	37
HRV	8	ALG	32

Data source: UNHCR 2020 Mid-Year Statistical report and UNHCR [data finder platform](#)

COVID-19 PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

Advocacy: UNHCR ensured the inclusion of persons of concern (PoCs) in the COVID-19 national response programmes, including risk communication, COVID-19 mitigation measures and vaccination plans. In mid-2020, UNHCR successfully supported the re-establishment of the asylum procedure, previously suspended between March and June.

Inclusion of persons of concern: Persons of concern are included in the National Strategy for the Procurement, Distribution and Administration of COVID-19 Vaccines.

Communication with Communities: UNHCR printed and distributed key WHO information materials (posters and leaflets) in 6 languages spoken by PoCs, ensuring they have access to factual and updated information related to COVID-19. UNHCR and partner organizations maintain continuous communication with PoCs, directly and through Viber and WhatsApp groups established to facilitate two-way communication during the lockdown.

HIGHLIGHTS

Asylum

UNHCR activities and advocacy in the area of asylum in Montenegro are aimed at facilitating a gradual shift from a country of transit and humanitarian response towards a country that offers both protection and solutions.

Statelessness

Montenegro is progressing towards meeting the #IBelong campaign goal to end statelessness by 2024 and all four HLS pledges, through further strengthening of birth registration and statelessness determination procedures.

Ex-Yugoslav refugees

The number of refugees from former Yugoslavia with unresolved legal status decreased from 868 to 325 in 2020, due to close cooperation between UNHCR and the Ministry of Interior. To date, 11,735 ex-Yugoslav refugees regulated their legal status in the country.



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A New Beginning: Three Refugees Make a New Life for themselves in Montenegro

Read the stories and see the videos about three refugees with different backgrounds and one thing in common – Montenegro is their new home.

<https://bit.ly/3emEWSH>

Key Priorities

■ Access to territory and procedures:

- Work towards establishment of protection-sensitive identification and referral procedures in line with comprehensive strategy for mixed-migration management.
- Monitor access to the territory of Montenegro, document and report pushbacks, protection incidents and propose interventions with relevant authorities in the country.
- Maintain protection presence at the asylum intention registration points, and advocate for the identification of persons with specific protection needs and, as appropriate, their referral to relevant bodies.

■ Asylum procedures:

- Monitor and improve, in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior, the quality of refugee status determination procedure, decisions of the 1st instance adjudication body and the 2nd instance Administrative Court.
- Strengthen case management in order to ensure expedient processing of asylum claims.
- Strengthen national legal aid system, civil society capacities and cross-sectorial networks in the area of asylum.

■ Reception:

- Advocate for access to adequate reception and accommodation of persons of concern and support effective contingency planning.
- Ensure adequate and timely health care to persons with specific needs.

■ Integration:

- Help develop a conducive socio-economic environment for refugees to foster their self-reliance and ensure no one is left behind, including through:
 - Securing inclusion of refugees in strategic documents, laws and by-laws;
 - Assume leading role in improving coordination among stakeholders in the sector of refugee integration;
 - Promote a holistic approach in strengthening refugees' self-reliance;
 - Identify gaps and create solutions to ensure effective access to rights and services (employment, equitable quality education, social care and psychosocial support, including in gender-based violence/GBV cases);
- Conduct individual follow-up to ensure unhindered access to rights.

■ Community Empowerment and Self-Reliance:

- Advocate for access to legal employment of refugees and long-term asylum seekers, including through regular and timely issuance of personal documentation.
- Facilitate refugees' access to state-provided grants for self-employment, as well as their participation in job fairs, often resulting in employment opportunities.

Working with Partners

- UNHCR works with the Government and within the UN system in Montenegro to ensure the inclusion of PoCs in all relevant strategic and legislative documents.
- UNHCR is leveraging networks with the EU Delegation, EASO, Frontex, IOM and the civil society sector at national and regional levels to foster comprehensive approaches to protection and solutions.

Statelessness

- Montenegro has a statelessness determination procedure (SDP) in place since 2018. To date, five people were recognized as stateless through this procedure.
- In September 2020, the Embassy of Serbia, with the support of UNHCR, introduced a tailor-made procedure for the issuance of identity documents to citizens of Serbia who are residing in Montenegro without any identity documents and lack stable legal status in the country.
- By December 2020, Montenegro started implementing, in 7 major cities, the new birth registration practice for children abandoned by their mothers, or whose mothers are without identity documents. The new practice foresees the engagement of municipal centres for social care, in line with the best interest determination principle.
- UNHCR is supporting the MoI with capacity building activities to facilitate effective implementation of the SDP, including through statelessness workshops in all municipalities.

UNHCR Presence in Montenegro

Staff:

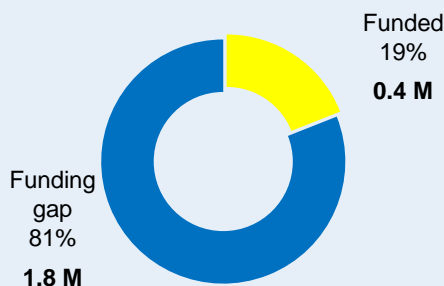
9 National Staff
 2 International Staff
 5 UNOPS

Offices:

1 Branch Office in Podgorica

Financial information (28 February 2021)

Financial Requirements
USD 2.2 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 million | Ireland 12.5 M | Belgium 11.9 M

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

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

European Union | Joint SDG Fund | Austria