

## Republic of North Macedonia

February 2021

**Mandate:** The UNHCR office in North Macedonia was established in **1993** and has been working closely with the government for the protection of persons under its mandate.

**Arrivals:** The total estimated number of arrivals in mixed movement up to the end of 2020 is **41,257**; **211** asylum claims were submitted in 2020 and 2 persons were granted subsidiary protection.

**UNSDCF:** UNHCR vigorously advocated and ensured that persons of concern are included in the new **UNSDCF for the period 2021-2025** on all levels.

### POPULATION OF CONCERN

Refugees	<b>308</b>
Asylum-seekers	<b>51</b>
Stateless people	<b>562</b>

### TOP THREE COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN

Refugees	Asylum-seekers
Serbia and Kosovo: S/RES/1244 (1999)... <b>276</b>	Pakistan <b>12</b>
Syrian Arab Rep. <b>17</b>	Afghanistan <b>12</b>
Congo <b>5</b>	Iraq <b>8</b>

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

### COVID-19 PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

**Advocacy:** Asylum-seekers are included in the government vaccination plan; UNHCR advocates for inclusion of all persons of concern.

**Inclusion:** COVID-19 positive asylum-seekers receive equal treatment on a par with North Macedonian citizens.

**Communication with Communities:** UNHCR operates a 24/7 helpline to maintain direct contact with refugees, asylum-seekers, and persons at risk of statelessness. To address protection and COVID-19 concerns, UNHCR introduced a dedicated email address, as well as a special section of the [HELP website](#).

**Health:** UNHCR is part of the regional project funded under the EU Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP): "Addressing COVID-19 Challenges within the Migrant and Refugee Response in the Western Balkans". Using project funds, UNHCR equipped reception and transit centres and established Safe Counselling rooms.

### HIGHLIGHTS



A forward-looking **multi-year Country Strategy** was developed in a consultative process with staff, partners and refugees and reflecting a comprehensive trend analysis and research by the Foresight Community of Practice.



UNHCR carried out an extensive stakeholder mapping to identify new potential partners and areas for priority attention.



UNHCR, IOM and UNFPA launched the project "Evidence-based migration policy planning and discourse in North Macedonia", funded by the Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund. The project aims at supporting national institutions in improving migration management



### Social Media Macros

UNHCR North Macedonia in collaboration with visual artist and local influencer In.dog launched an illustrated social media campaign which calls for refugees' rights. For more visit this [link](#).

## Key Priorities

- **Establish protection sensitive entry systems:** UNHCR advocates with the government for:
    - Improved registration of persons on the move to timely identify those seeking international protection and refer them to the asylum authorities.
    - Return of persons not in need of international protection in safety, dignity and full respect of international, regional, and national legislation relevant for readmission.
  - **Improve the quality of the asylum procedure:** UNHCR advocates with the government for:
    - Prioritised decision-making on manifestly well-founded applications and granting international protection based on the merit of the case.
    - Judicial review of administrative decisions to take in-merit decisions to increase efficiency of the asylum procedure.
    - State-financed provision of quality interpretation services, at all stages of the asylum procedure.
    - State-financed provision of quality and free-of-charge legal aid, at all stages of the asylum procedure.
  - **Foster solutions:** UNHCR advocates with the government for:
    - Finding sustainable legal solutions for the remaining Kosovo\* refugees, in line with the country's 2019 Global Refugee Forum pledge.
    - Provision of state-sponsored integration services for persons with international protection status.
    - Full socio-economic inclusion of asylum-seekers, as early as feasible in the asylum procedure, by securing access to language classes, labour market and fundamental rights. The ultimate goal is to ensure viable integration prospects.
    - Simplified naturalization procedures for refugees.
- \*References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999).
- **Foster anticipatory governance** in developing and implementing a Migration Policy, and in building strategic and anticipatory governance capacities to support transition to long-term and participatory planning and policy-making. This will raise institutional trust and help address causes of social problems impacting the protection environment.

- **Communicate for social change** to improve the public narrative about the integration of refugees by fostering new attitudes and behaviours in host communities and broadening the platform of stakeholders to combat misinformation.
- **Strategically engage** with a wide range of stakeholders (civil society, private sector, academia, non-traditional partners, international organizations, and others) to build new partnerships and mobilize a broader coalition to advocate for the rights of people under UNHCR's mandate.

## Working with Partners

- **UNHCR North Macedonia has established formal partnerships** with the City Red Cross of Skopje, Macedonian Young Lawyers Association, Macedonian Institute for Media, as well as with public institutions and ministries, the Ombudsman's office and the Justinianus Primus Law Faculty. The working relationship with the Ministry of Interior is ongoing.
- Within **United Nation Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2021-2025 (UNSDCF)** UNHCR partners with UN Agencies and advocates for a comprehensive inclusion of refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless persons in Government policies. The response to the COVID-19 has also provided an additional platform to cooperate with other UN agencies as "One UN".

## Statelessness

- North Macedonia is signatory to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on Reduction of Statelessness. However, a statelessness determination procedure has yet to be introduced.

## UNHCR Presence in North Macedonia

### Staff:

24 National Staff \*

2 International Staff

\*including 8 UNOPS and 1 TA

### Offices:

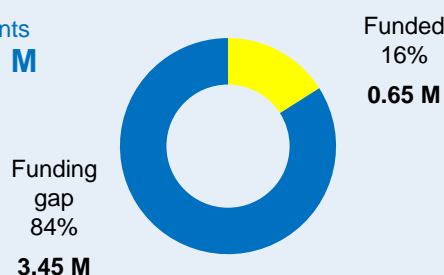
1 Representation Office in Skopje

1 Field Unit in Gevgelija

## Financial information (28 February 2021)

### Financial

Requirements  
**USD 4.1 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 | 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 North Macedonia is also grateful for contributions from the following donors (as of 28 February 2021):

Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund