

Montenegro

September 2021

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

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

Montenegro remains a [front-runner for EU accession](#), albeit with pending comprehensive reforms in key areas, including those affecting UNHCR persons of concern.

POPULATION OF CONCERN

Refugees	176
Asylum-seekers	193
Stateless persons	472
Others of concern	1,094

TOP THREE COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN*

Refugees	Asylum-seekers
Serbia and Kosovo: S/RES/1244 (1999) 130	Morocco 56
Iran 9	Iran 42
Yemen 7	Cuba 18

*Data source: UNHCR 2020 Global Trends Report and UNHCR [data finder platform](#)

COVID-19 PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

Advocacy: UNHCR ensured inclusion of persons of concern (POC) 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, suspended between March and June.

Communication with Communities: UNHCR printed and distributed WHO information materials in 6 languages, ensuring access to updated information related to COVID-19 and vaccination. UNHCR and the partners maintain continuous communication with POCs, directly and through Viber and WhatsApp groups established to facilitate two-way communication during the lock-down.

Health: Procurement of PPEs and hygiene items for POCs and asylum authorities. Enhanced provision of **healthcare** in the asylum system, through procurement of medicines and engagement of two part-time doctors at the Asylum Centre.

HIGHLIGHTS

Asylum

UNHCR activities and advocacy in the area of asylum aim to support the strengthening of national asylum systems and related processes to provide protection and viable solutions to refugees and asylum seekers

Statelessness

Montenegro is progressing towards fulfilling the #iBelong goal to end statelessness by 2024 and all 4 HLS pledges, by further strengthening the birth registration and the statelessness determination procedures.

Ex-Yugoslav refugees

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



After 35 years, the nightmare of a legal limbo ends for a mother of 9 in Montenegro

“Statelessness is like a family virus that you pass down to your children – and wearing a mask and washing hands does not help!”

Read the full story here: <https://bit.ly/3tGFUyn>

Key Priorities

- **Access to territory and procedures:** Work towards establishment of protection-sensitive identification and referral procedures in line with the Strategy for UNHCR Engagement in Mixed-Movements in the Western Balkans. Monitor access to territory, document and report pushbacks, protection incidents and propose interventions with authorities.
- Maintain protection presence at asylum intention registration points and advocate for the identification of specific protection needs and referral to relevant bodies.
- **Asylum procedures:** In cooperation with authorities, monitor and secure access to the registration of asylum intentions and improve the quality of refugee status determination procedure, at first instance and appeal. Strengthen case management in order to ensure expedient processing of asylum claims. Strengthen national legal aid system, civil society organisations capacities and cross-sectorial networks.
- **Reception:** Advocate for access to adequate reception and accommodation of persons of concern and support for contingency planning. Ensure adequate and timely health care to persons with specific needs.

Integration: Help develop a friendly socio-economic environment for refugees to foster self-reliance through: Securing inclusion of refugees in strategic documents, laws and by-laws; leading in improving coordination among integration; Promoting a holistic approach in strengthening refugees' self-reliance; Identifying gaps and solutions to ensure effective access to rights and services (employment, equitable quality education, social care and psychosocial support, including in SGBV cases).

- **Self-Reliance:** Advocate for access to legal employment of refugees and asylum seekers, including through timely issuance of documentation. Facilitate refugees' access to state-provided grants for self-employment and job fairs.

Working with Partners

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

Statelessness

- Montenegro has a statelessness determination procedures since 2018, through which to date, eight persons have been recognized as stateless. UNHCR is capacitating the MoI to further strengthen the SDP and birth registration.
- In September 2020, the Embassy of Serbia, with UNHCR, introduced a tailor-made procedure for identity documents to citizens of Serbia who are residing in Montenegro lacking identity documents and stable legal status.
- By December 2020, the new birth registration started practice for abandoned children, or whose mothers are without identity documents, in 7 major cities. The new practice foresees engaging municipal centres for social care.

UNHCR Presence in Montenegro

Staff:

9 National Staff
 1 International Staff
 5 UNOPS

Offices:

1 Branch Office in Podgorica

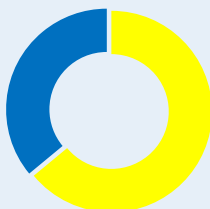
Financial information (28 September 2021)

Financial requirements

USD 2.2 M

Funding gap
 36%

0.8 M



Funded
 64%
1.4 M

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