

# Greece

September saw **950 arrivals recorded**, bringing the total arrivals in **2020** to **13,000**. The authorities moved almost **all unaccompanied children out of** dire reception

centres. The sweeping **fires** in Moria left **12,000** people homeless. UNHCR helped Greek authorities to provide **immediate shelter and assistance** along with UN agencies,

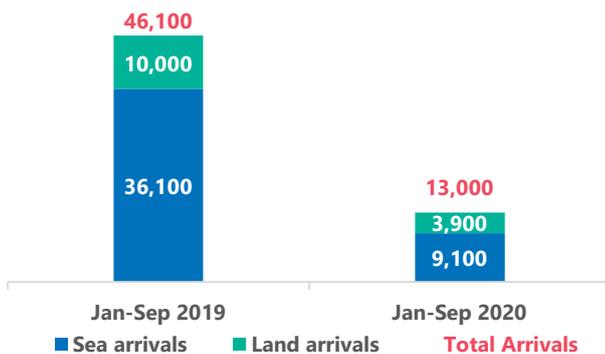
NGOs and volunteers. Over **1,000 vulnerable persons and children** have been relocated this year from Greece as part of the EU-wide **relocation** initiative of solidarity.

## REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS IN GREECE\*

**121,100**

**98,200** in the mainland and **22,900** on the islands

Arrivals



\*UNHCR estimates as of 30 September 2020 of those who arrived and remained in Greece since the 2015 – 2016 flow.

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

**82,250**

eligible asylum-seekers and refugees received cash assistance this month

**15,000**

accommodation places by UNHCR

**12,000**

accommodation places by the Ministry of Migration and Asylum

## PEOPLE IN UNHCR'S ESTIA ACCOMMODATION

**68%** children enrolled in schools

**56%** have access to healthcare (AMKA or PAAYPA)

**56%** have tax identification number (AFM)

**22%** registered with unemployment agency (OAED)

**6%** have a bank account

## UNHCR PRESENCE

### Staff:

314 National Staff

34 International Staff

### Offices:

1 Country Office in Athens

2 Sub Offices in Thessaloniki, Lesbos

3 Field Offices in Chios, Samos, Kos

4 Field Units in Evros, Ioannina, Leros, Rhodes



An asylum-seeker carries bamboo to build a makeshift shelter for his family, after the Moria reception and identification centre was destroyed by fires.

## Working with Partners

- UNHCR supports the Government of Greece which leads the refugee response, working closely with other United Nations agencies, international and national NGOs, regional and State institutions, municipalities, grassroots organizations, refugee communities and the local community.

## Main Activities

### COVID-19 Prevention and Response

- UNHCR assists the Greek Government's prevention and response to COVID-19 in the reception centres by increasing water and sanitation capacity, providing core relief and hygiene items, installing health units for screening and isolation, distributing additional cash assistance, facilitating information dissemination through helplines and interpreters and enhancing its coordination role with authorities, NGOs and UN agencies, including the [World Health Organization](#) (WHO).
- UNHCR protects the population at high risk of COVID-19 complications in the island reception centres – where it is difficult to apply social distancing measures – by moving them to safer accommodation. Since mid-March, UNHCR has moved **2,000 people**.
- On the islands and in Evros, UNHCR has provided **55 medical units** for screening and isolation as well as **198 portable units** for hygiene and sanitation, including chemical toilets, showers and hand washing stations.
- UNHCR has provided over **174,700 hygiene items** such as soap and baby care kits, **63,800 core relief items**, such as blankets and sleeping bags, as well as more than **251,300 personal protective equipment** for front-line workers.
- UNHCR facilitates access to quality information for asylum-seekers via helplines, interpretation, the [HELP](#) website, [podcasts](#), [radio spots](#), [a YouTube channel](#). UNHCR also assists refugee communities offer help to residents in the island reception centres.
- UNHCR and partners running non-formal education centres ensure that classrooms are adequately equipped, distances are observed, and children can learn in a safe environment.

### Accommodation and Cash Assistance

- UNHCR runs the EU-funded [ESTIA accommodation](#) and [cash assistance](#) programmes in cooperation with the Government, municipalities and NGOs. UNHCR works closely with staff from State agencies for the transition of these programmes to the Greek authorities. This month, the management of 12,000 places in apartments transitioned from UNHCR and its partners to the Greek authorities; a key milestone in the transition process.
- Apartments in cities and towns offer asylum-seekers and refugees greater dignity and independence. The host population also benefits from the **4,640 apartments and eight buildings** that the programme rents in **21 cities and towns** across Greece. In

September, UNHCR had **15,000 accommodation places** and the Ministry of Migration and Asylum **12,000 places**.

- UNHCR gave cash in the form of pre-paid cards to **82,240 asylum-seekers and refugees** in apartments and sites. In September, **8.4 million euro** in cash assistance will eventually be re-injected into the local economy.

### Protection

- A number of fires that broke out on 8-10 September destroyed the reception centre in Moria with no casualties. UNHCR deployed additional staff on the ground and offered assistance to the Greek authorities, over concerns about the situation of some 12,000 asylum-seekers who were left homeless. More than 4,000 children as well as other vulnerable groups, including unaccompanied children, pregnant women and elderly people were affected. In the new emergency site created by the authorities, UNHCR with IOM and other actors swiftly supported with the set-up, site planning and outreach to facilitate the shelter allocation, provision of information and distribution of relief items for all those who entered the site. UNHCR [called](#) for immediate shelter support for the affected asylum-seekers, but also long-term solutions to address overcrowding on Greek islands.
- In September, UNHCR Assistant High Commissioners for Protection and Operations, Gillian Triggs and Raouf Mazou, concluded a four-day visit to Greece. They [urged](#) for more support and proposed concrete measures to the Greek authorities, reiterating UNHCR readiness to support with the refugee self-reliance and integration programs. Their visit also focused on issues relating to access to territory and asylum, living conditions for refugees and asylum-seekers on the mainland and the islands, the management of the COVID-19 response, child protection, alternatives to detention, refugee integration and the transition of accommodation and cash programmes to the Greek State.
- UNHCR's team at the land border in Evros, helped those arriving at the Fylakio reception centre, such as families and unaccompanied children, to access necessary services, provided them with information and helped the authorities identify those with specific needs who require special assistance.
- UNHCR helped strengthen the national system and expertise by seconding **64 experts** to various State agencies to bolster their response and by organizing trainings for Governmental staff.
- UNHCR supported the Asylum Service with experts who advise the caseworkers upon request on how to conduct interviews, draft decisions on asylum applications and provided on-the-job training. UNHCR assisted in **10,500 first instance interviews in 2020, and 58,600 since 2016**. This support improved the quality of asylum processing while ensuring continued integrity of the procedure.
- From the beginning of 2020, UNHCR and its partners have helped over **7,900 asylum-seekers and beneficiaries of international protection** with counselling and legal representation in order to prepare and support their cases, as for example for family reunification procedures.
- UNHCR [HELP website](#) answers questions in seven languages on [how to apply for asylum](#), on [rights and obligations](#), and on available services when [living in Greece](#).

### Child Protection

- Very few unaccompanied children remain in the reception and identification centres on the islands and Evros through the concerted efforts of UNHCR, IOM, UNICEF and NGO partners under the leadership of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum. As such, this month **752 unaccompanied children** were moved from the islands to the temporary shelters on mainland. Since January 2020, UNHCR has removed approximately **2,200 unaccompanied children** from precarious conditions to appropriate shelter on the mainland where they can find care.
- Similar efforts to ensure protection and care are necessary for the approximately 1,000 unaccompanied children in Greece who are living in informal or insecure housing conditions such as in apartments with strangers, in squats, are homeless or on the move (data of [Ministry of Labour](#) as of 30 September).
- UNHCR identifies vulnerable children and supports them with legal aid and psychosocial support through partners and boosts the response of the Government with expertise, trainings and research. This month, at least **1,600 homeless children** and vulnerable children have received psychosocial support and legal assistance. Along with partners, UNHCR works with the authorities to diversify alternative care arrangements, such as family-based foster care for younger children.

### Prevention and Response to Sexual and Gender-based Violence

- Lack of privacy, inadequate lighting and long distance to toilets and showers foster risks of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in the sites.
- UNHCR and its partners continued work to prevent and respond to SGBV in urban areas as well as some field locations and islands to identify [survivors](#), including men and LGBTI persons, as well as people at-risk, offering case management, legal information, counselling, psychosocial and medical attention through partners. UNHCR refers those affected to State services and shelters or accommodation in apartments where they can get expert help.
- UNHCR supported the authorities to strengthen the national reporting mechanism on trafficking, especially on the islands where the situation is more challenging.

### Education

- UNHCR with UNICEF and other actors support the [Ministry of Education](#) to include refugee boys and girls in public education.
- The school year started with special prevention measures against the spread of COVID-19 in place. In the current school year, **78% of recognized refugee children** in ESTIA accommodation are enrolled into public schools alongside their Greek peers. Several hurdles continue hindering education opportunities on the islands, where out of **5,100 school-aged children** (4-17), slightly more than 100 children attend public schools. In addition, with quarantine and restriction of movement measures significantly affecting the transportation of students, school openings have equally been impacted, while special reception classes on the islands remain idle.
- UNHCR [foresees](#) that unless immediate and bold action is taken by the international community to beat back the catastrophic effects of COVID-19 on refugee education, the prospects for young refugees will be further threatened.

- Ahead of the new school year, **ten coordination and training workshops** were held in September, to increase awareness in the classrooms about forced displacement through online seminars.

### Health

- UNHCR continued to work with the [Ministry of Health](#), the [National Public Health Organization](#) (EODY) and partners to help refugees and asylum-seekers gain entry into the health care system, in coordination with the [World Health Organization](#).
- Access to health care for asylum-seekers and refugees continued to be limited at several locations across Greece, in particular on the islands, mainly due to the limited public sector medical staff and difficulties in obtaining the necessary documentation.
- UNHCR supported primary healthcare and psychosocial support services in Lesvos and mental health services in Attika and Thessaloniki. UNHCR continued to work with experts to train and build the skills of non-specialist refugees to offer basic psychosocial support and empower vulnerable refugees, including those with mental health conditions.

### Durable Solutions

- Since 2013, **54,300** people acquired **refugee or subsidiary protection** in Greece ([Asylum Service](#) and [Ministry of Migration and Asylum](#) data as of February). In September, **5,000 recognised** refugees benefitted from cash assistance and **6,700 beneficiaries of international protection** were accommodated in UNHCR's apartments.
- UNHCR's partners support those living in the accommodation scheme with job matching or referral to develop skills, vocational trainings and language courses. Of the recognised refugees living in UNHCR's accommodation, **78% have an AMKA social security number, 73% have an AFM tax number, and 33%** are registered with **OAED unemployment agency**. However, only **10% have a bank account** which is a prerequisite for receiving a salary, among other.
- UNHCR also helps refugees navigate the Greek civil, social and economic system and obtain much needed documents, such as travel papers and family certificates. These are necessary for refugees to find gainful employment and eventually be included in the Greek society. More language classes and job trainings for adults can accelerate refugees' integration.

### Returns and Relocation

- September marked the **relocation of over 1,000 people** from Greece to other European Union member states. UN agencies, including UNHCR, [hailed](#) this development and called for more EU solidarity through relocations following the release of the European Commission's New Pact on Migration and Asylum, which contains a series of legislative proposals on the EU's approach to migration and asylum.
- As of September, **292 unaccompanied children** have been [relocated](#) from Greece to Germany, Finland, Portugal, Belgium, Luxemburg, Ireland and France, with more European States' having pledged to accept 1,135 in total so far. In addition, **774**

**children** with serious medical needs and their family members have relocated to Germany and France.

- UNHCR and its partners, in coordination with IOM, UNICEF and EASO, supported the authorities, in the identification and selection of children according to their best interests, as well as with their transportation to the mainland for their eventual departure. UNHCR and partners have supported the authorities in assessing the [best interest](#) of 380 children, including homeless children and children living in precarious conditions.
- This month, **no people** were returned from Greece to Turkey in the framework of the E.U. - Turkey Statement, with a total of **2,140 people** [returned](#) since 20 March 2016.

### Shelter and Basic Assistance

- [Following the fires in Moria](#), UNHCR made available core relief items for all **11,500** affected by the fires, provided **45** water and hygiene facilities, set up **900** family tents and **four** Rubb Halls and deployed additional personnel to assist the authorities in site planning and support, health, distribution of core relief items and coordination. UNHCR also distributed an emergency, one-off cash top-up to some **4,470** households affected by the fire with the support of the European Commission.
- UNHCR with partners is managing – in coordination with the Municipality of Lesbos – the Kara Tepe accommodation site which provides quality accommodation and protection to **900 vulnerable people or families**.

### Partners

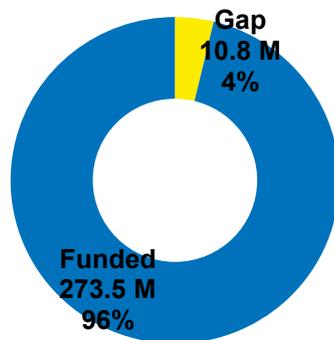
In September, UNHCR worked through **32 partners**: [ARSIS](#), [Iliaktida](#), [INTERSOS](#), [NOSTOS](#), [Praxis](#), [Solidarity Now](#), [Catholic Relief Services](#), the [International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies](#), [METAdrasi](#), the [Greek Council for Refugees](#), the [Network for Children's Rights](#), [Doctors of the World](#), the [Association for Regional Development and Mental Health \(EPAPSY\)](#), [Diotima](#), [Faros](#), [International Rescue Committee](#), [International Catholic Migration Commission \(ICMC\)](#), [Hellenic Theatre/Drama & Education Network \(TENet\)](#), [UNOPS](#), [Perichoresis](#), [OMNES](#) and the Local Authorities of Athens, Piraeus, Thessaloniki, Livadia, Herakleion, Trikala, Nea Filadelfia – Nea Chalkidona, Karditsa, Larissa, Tripoli and Tilos.

### LINKS

[Mediterranean Situation](#) – [UNHCR Greece](#) – [Twitter](#) – [Facebook](#) - [YouTube](#)

**FUNDING (AS OF 7 OCTOBER 2020)**

**USD 284.3 M** requested for the Greece Operation



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