Montenegro
1 January – 30 September 2019

As of 30 September 2019, 5,431 people expressed intention to seek asylum, out of whom 1,294 (24%) submitted an asylum application.

14,881 people have applied for asylum in Montenegro since 2007.

77 people have been granted international protection in Montenegro since 2007.

KEY INDICATORS

58 asylum seekers interviewed

1,249 cases processed made by the DfA:
- 5 (0.4%) granted international protection
- 5 (0.4%) rejected
- 1,239 (99.2%) suspended
- 37 pending

Out of 1,294 asylum seekers:
- 1,155 (89%) men
- 139 (11%) women
- 155 (12%) children

UNHCR PRESENCE: 23

8 regular UNHCR staff: 1 international and 7 national
2 Temporary Assitances: 1 international and 1 nat.
8 UNOPS consultants – all national
3 Interpreters
2 EU volunteers

Languages spoken: Montenegrin, Arabic, English, Spanish, French, Russian, Bulgarian, German, Japanese, Italian.

POPULATION OF CONCERN

Countries of Origin
out of 1,294 people who submitted an asylum application since 2019:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>IX months</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>282 (22%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>254 (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>236 (18%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>200 (15%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>82 (6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>240 (19%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>1,294</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

New Arrivals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>IX months</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>1309 (24%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>1302 (24%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>952 (18%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>516 (9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>372 (7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>980 (18%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Update on Achievements

Operational Context

As of 30 September 2019, 5,431 persons expressed intention to seek asylum, out of whom 1,294 persons (24%) submitted an asylum application – a difference of 4,137 (estimated 76%).

Out of the 1,294 people who submitted an asylum application, the highest number came from

- Morocco (282 people – 24%)
- Iraq (254 people – 20%)
- Syria (236 people – 18%)
- Algeria (200 people – 15%)
- Pakistan (82 people – 6%).

Of those who submitted an asylum application in 2019, 1,155 were male (89%) and 139 female (11%), including a total of 156 (12%) children.

Achievements

UNHCR's support to the Government of Montenegro in strengthening the asylum system (January – September 2019)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RECEPTION AND ACCOMMODATION</th>
<th>Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Security</strong></td>
<td>3 security guards engaged by UNHCR on a 24/7 basis and deployed to the reception facilities in Spuz and Konik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Psycho-social support</strong></td>
<td>2 social workers seconded to the Reception Centre in Spuž</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-food items</strong></td>
<td>Clothing, footwear and hygienic items donated to the reception centers for distribution to asylum seekers (5,431 persons estimated)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health care assistance</strong></td>
<td>364 persons received medicines distributed through partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Some 200 persons received interpretation support during medical checks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASYLUM PROCEDURE</th>
<th>Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Free legal aid</strong></td>
<td>3,200 persons assisted, including representation in the refugee status determination process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interpreting</strong></td>
<td>1 interpreter for Arabic, French and English deployed full-time to the Directorate for Asylum (MoI)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interpretation for Farsi, Urdu and other languages during the RSD interviews and upon request from state authorities and asylum seekers.

| Access to information | Brochures in 9 languages for people seeking international protection |

### INTEGRATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rental costs</td>
<td>8 families assisted with coverage of rental costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>10 persons granted international protection were assisted with Montenegrin language courses at the CEFR A1 level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9 children supported with school supplies, including books, school bags and stationery, as well as transportation to school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal and psycho-social support</td>
<td>37 persons received free legal aid, interpreting, and psycho-social counselling</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### PROTECTION

**Achievements and Impact**

- **Ex-Yu Refugees assisted with obtaining a legal status**

In view of 2018 strategic refocusing, UNHCR carried out a field Verification in November 2017 to assess those with still-pending status issues in order to provide them with targeted assistance to obtain a legal durable solution – the permanent residence in Montenegro. During this exercise, 2,318 persons were verified, out of which 1,944 had applied for a legal status and were found in Montenegro. UNHCR progressively followed-up on all with still unresolved status in Montenegro, and in cooperation with Serbian and Kosovo* authorities continued to provide free legal aid with the aim of obtaining missing documents (birth/citizenship certificates, IDs and passports), which is the pre-requisite for Montenegro to grant them the permanent residence status. The MoI official data show that, thanks to UNHCR support, the number of permits for foreigner with permanent residence from December 2017 until end of September 2019 increased by 287. From the end of 2017 to date, UNHCR provided support to more than 1,100 ex-Yugoslavia refugees (some 716 in 2018 and 450 in 2019) to obtain various documents necessary for completing their applications for the status of a foreigner with permanent residence.

Among those supported by UNHCR, there is an 87-year old man, who fled from Kosovo conflict in 1999, assisted to obtain a passport from his country of origin, the Republic of Serbia, for the first time. This enabled him to obtain a permanent residence status in Montenegro, which provided him the opportunity to access health care, among other rights.
• **Training courses for the Directorate for Asylum staff**
  Following an agreement with the Ministry of Interior (MoI), as of end September, UNHCR organized three (3) trainings for the staff of the MoI’s Directorate for Asylum (DfA), the first instance asylum adjudication body, on countries of origin. The aim was to share with the MoI case workers conducting refugee status determination interviews up-to-date information on the main countries of origin of relevance in Montenegro. The training sessions focused on Iran, Iraq and Pakistan.

• **Joint UNHCR-IOM Workshop on mixed-migration (migration and asylum)**
  On 16-17 April, UNHCR and IOM jointly organized a workshop to support the preparedness of competent state authorities and institutions to deal with mixed-migration (migration and asylum) in a protection-sensitive manner. The workshop was attended by the MoI’s Director-General for Civil Statuses and Personal Documents, the Directorate for Asylum, the Directorate for the Care of Refugees and Border Police, the Ministry of Social Welfare, the Ministry of Health, the Red Cross and the Civic Alliance. The workshop enabled an exchange of information, stock-taking of the accomplishments, and the identification of challenges and possible solutions focusing on border control, reception and accommodation, asylum procedure and durable solutions.

• **Regional Statelessness Conference in Madrid**
  On 25-26 April, a Montenegrin delegation consisting of the Director General for Multilateral Relations at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and a delegate from the Ministry of Interior participated in the Regional Statelessness Conference co-organized in Madrid by UNHCR and the Government of Spain. This event was a preparatory step for the High-Level Segment during UNHCR’s Executive Committee in October 2019. The experience of Montenegro in terms of prevention and response to statelessness was showcased as a positive example where valuable lessons can be learnt for post-conflict scenarios.

• **Preliminary results from MICS survey of households**
  On 28 June, UNICEF presented the results of the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS), which was carried out with the support of the Statistical Office and UNHCR Montenegro. The survey aimed to generate data on the situation of child and family rights in Montenegro and covered a total of 3,826 households across the country and additional 854 households in Roma settlements. The survey, whose results will be published in October 2019, will help UNHCR re-assess the birth registration rate, particularly among the Roma and Egyptian communities, which are the most exposed to the risk of statelessness.
• Personal Data Protection workshop for UNHCR Partners
On 2 July 2019, UNHCR and its partners (Red Cross of Montenegro, Civic Alliance and Legal Centre) attended a training delivered by the Agency for the Protection of Personal Data and Free Access to Information. Participants were reminded of the relevant legal framework on protection of personal data in Montenegro, including the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), as well as of data protection obligations of every social worker and data officer working in partnership with UNHCR. This training followed a previous meeting with the Agency for Data Protection, in which UNHCR shared its Data Protection Policy, which is under revision to further align it to the GPP and GDPR.

• Security Training to enhance preparedness of the personnel working in the field
On 24 July, UNHCR Montenegro in collaboration with UNHCR Snr. Regional Field Safety Adviser (SRFSA) organized the second Security Training for its staff and partner organizations to enhance the awareness and preparedness of the IT personnel working in the field to address daily security challenges. During the two-day mission, 27 people from UNHCR, the RCM and the CA attended the training.

EDUCATION

• Montenegrin language certificates for 7 asylum seekers and refugees
During the first half of 2019, 3 asylum seekers and 7 refugees attended a 6-months’ language course organized as a result of the cooperation between UNHCR and the Government of Montenegro. Seven of them received their language certificates after passing the test in the Montenegrin language and culture. On top of that, 3 were supported through the mobile App Pimsleur, which is being tested.

• Customized Programme for Montenegrin language, history and culture learning adopted
On 16 July, the National Council for Education adopted the Educational Program for Montenegrin language, history and culture learning for asylees and foreigners under subsidiary protection foreseen by the Asylum Law. It is expected that this, together with the customized programme will be more effective in supporting the integration process of people granted asylum in Montenegro.
• Children supported ahead of the new school year

Ahead of the new school year 2019-2020, UNHCR Montenegro financially supported two girls from Ghana to enrol into the Islamic High School, and one child under six to attend the kindergarten. Thanks to UNHCR support, 11 children (asylum seekers and refugees) were able to buy school books and supplies, while transport to school was arranged for 4 children for a 6-months period.

• Health care, psychosocial counselling and clothes for the most vulnerable asylum seekers

From October 2017 to date, UNHCR and its partners reached out to people daily, supporting the Government in providing adequate health care, psychosocial counselling and clothes for the most vulnerable asylum seekers. In 2019, UNHCR assisted some 200 persons with access to medical services and provided 364 persons with medicines. Among them, in a joint effort by the staff from the Clinical Centre of Montenegro, the Social Work Centre, the Red Cross of Montenegro and UNHCR, a boy from Iran was provided with urgent medical assistance, which saved his life.

• A single refugee mother and her son got access to health care

On 29 June, a single refugee mother and her son received a decision of the Administrative Court of Montenegro overruling the decision of the Ministry of Health by which the two had been denied health care in Montenegro. As a result, the family will now be entitled to state-provided health care. The family received protection in Montenegro in 2017. In the proceedings before the Administrative Court of Montenegro, the refugee family was represented free of charge by UNHCR’s partner Civic Alliance.
SHELTER AND NFIS

- Community Containers in the Asylum Center
  In May 2019 UNHCR donated two containers for community-based activities to the MoI, now placed in the Asylum Centre in Spuz. They were donated to create a space for recreational activities.

- Ex-Yugoslav Refugees: A new project under way
  Under the framework of the Regional Housing Project (RHP), there are 8 approved sub-projects in Montenegro, while one concept note is under review. Four are the projects completed thus far: (1) the Niksic project (62 apartments), (2) the Konik one (120 apartments as of November 2017, in addition to 51 apartments in December 2018), (3) the Pljevlja project (the Elderly Home with 68 beds as of April 2018), and (4) the one in Berane (94 apartments), in addition to four ongoing projects: (1) in Herceg Novi (36 apartments), (2) Montenegro-wide (individual houses, 50 units), (3) in Vrela Ribnička (96 apartments), and (4) in Nikšić (the Elderly Home, 104 beds). Thus far, 381 families benefited through the project, while Montenegro is the only country where Kosovo refugees are beneficiaries of the RHP.

COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND SELF RELIANCE

Syrian family reunited thanks to joint efforts by the Government of Montenegro and UNHCR
  On 20 February, UNHCR assisted the reunification of a Syrian family from Homs. With the support of UNHCR operations in Syria and Lebanon, UNHCR Montenegro arranged the travel of a mother and her 3 children who could re-join the father granted international protection in Montenegro in October 2018. This was the third family reunification case approved by the Government of Montenegro and supported by UNHCR since 2016.

- Launch of the 1st individual integration plan for a single refugee woman
  In September 2019, in cooperation with the Directorate for Integration (MoI), UNHCR Montenegro assisted an Ethiopian refugee in enrolling into the Hairstyle Academy in Podgorica. During a 6 months period, she will acquire both practical and theoretical knowledge to become a qualified hairdresser. Subject to her performance, upon completion of the training, she may be provided with a job by the Academy.
Since 2017, UNHCR has been providing support to 37 refugees in their integration efforts in Montenegro, working initially through pilot projects and with the MLSW in 2018 and the MoI as of January 2019. UNHCR has put great efforts into enhancing the self-reliance of those granted asylum and improving their livelihoods. As an alternative to collective accommodation, UNHCR introduced cash-based interventions (CBI) for rents to the persons granted protection, following the “Alternative to camp” approach. In 2018, UNHCR developed a fruitful collaboration with the Employment Agency of Montenegro (EAM), supporting full integration of people granted protection, through the creation of an environment supportive to their access to livelihoods through coordinated interventions (a crash-course in language, training from the EAM, job placement, etc). UNHCR has also established a cooperation with the Ministry of Education (MoE), which is in charge of facilitating the learning of the Montenegrin language and culture.

An Ethiopian refugee to run in Tirana Marathon to thank Montenegro

Taddalech (Mercimo) Bekele, an Ethiopian refugee living in Montenegro, will participate in the Tirana half-marathon in October. Feeling grateful for the international protection granted in Montenegro, Bekele will run to thank her country of asylum. UNHCR Montenegro will join UNHCR Albania team in the marathon, adding kilometres to the global total under the global campaign “2 Billion Kilometres to Safety”.

DURABLE SOLUTIONS

- Refugees from the former Yugoslavia

Since the 90s, Montenegro has maintained an open-door policy for people fleeing the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia. Over the years, this has been concretized by introducing the possibility of local integration through the status of foreigner with permanent residence. This legal status grants access to all rights, except the right to vote, on equal footing as Montenegrin citizens. By 30 September 2019, a total of 12,927 former IDPs held the foreigner status, of whom 11,663 with permanent and 234 with temporary residence, while 378 applications were rejected and 652 are still pending (26 from BiH/Cro and 626 from Kosovo*).
Working in partnership

- **Coordination Meetings on Asylum**
  In 2019, for the first time ever, the MoI and UNHCR co-chaired two Coordination Meetings on Asylum. The meetings held in March and in May respectively were attended by all asylum-related directorates, UNHCR, and its partners - the Red Cross Montenegro and the Civic Alliance.

- **Workshop for journalists: reporting on refugees and migrants**
  On 17 April, UNHCR organized a workshop for journalists on standards in reporting on refugees and migrants. The workshop, attended by nine national and regional media outlets and facilitated by UNHCR’s Regional Spokesperson, was an opportunity for media representatives to learn about the differences between refugees and migrants and to engage in a discussion on reporting on these topics.

- **2019 World Refugee Day**
  UNHCR Montenegro marked the World Refugee Day jointly with the Government of Montenegro and with the support by the Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB) and UN Resident Coordinator’s Office. The event hosted at the UN Eco House was held on the occasion of the RHP Steering Committee and the Assembly of Donors. The 2019 edition was dedicated to the RHP as an example to address durable housing solutions. The event was attended by ambassadors, key RHP stakeholders and donors, high Government officials, international organizations, regional partners, refugees from the former Yugoslavia, as well as people granted international protection in Montenegro.

- **First Donor Coordination Meeting of the Ministry of Interior, IOM and UNCHR**
  On 22 July, the Ministry of Interior of Montenegro (MoI), UNHCR and IOM organized the First Donor Coordination Meeting entitled ‘Joint Response to Mixed Migration’, which brought together representatives of diplomatic missions to Montenegro, international organizations and other stakeholders who are involved or interested into mixed migration management in Montenegro. The event was an opportunity to present an overview of the current asylum and migration state at the country level and explore funding opportunities with a view to enhancing the operational response to mixed migration movements in a protection-sensitive way. The keynote addresses were given by the Minister of Interior of Montenegro and the UN Resident
Coordinator, which were followed by presentations on reception (MoI), asylum (UNHCR) and migration (IOM) components.

- In terms of partnerships, UNHCR works closely with the Government of Montenegro. Key counterparts are: the Ministry of Interior, the Police Directorate, the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, the Employment Office, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education, the Administrative Court, the Capital City of Podgorica and the Municipalities of Pljevlja, Berane and Bar.

- UNHCR closely collaborates with the EUD, OSCE and UNHCR Mission in Kosovo*, as well as with the Ombudsperson, the Bar Association and the University of Montenegro.

- Within the UN system, UNHCR is part of the UN Country Team and the Delivering as One framework.

- UNHCR’s partners in 2019 are:

  **Asylum:**
  - the Red Cross of Montenegro: psycho-social support, access to services, drug provision and particularly health care;
  - NGO Civic Alliance: free legal aid.

  **Ex-Yu Refugees and Statelessness:**
  - Legal Centre – legal status related free legal aid for the refugees from the former Yugoslavia still with an unstable legal status and people at risk of statelessness.

**Financial Information**

UNHCR Montenegro is very grateful for the financial support provided by donors who have contributed to activities with unearmarked and broadly earmarked funds as well as for those who have contributed directly to the operation.

**Donors who have contributed to the operation:**

- **United States of America** (200,000 USD)
  - **IPA Funds:** Under the IPA Project “Regional Support to Protection-Sensitive Migration Management in the Western Balkans and Turkey” at the regional level 1 million EUR from 1 July 2019 to 20 June 2021.
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