

Montenegro

February 2022

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**.

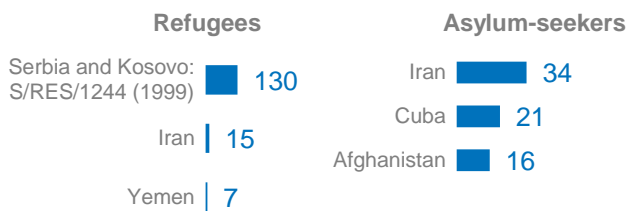
In October 2019, at a High-Level Segment on Statelessness, Montenegro pledged to **end statelessness by 2024** and resolve the status of all refugees with unresolved legal status from the former Yugoslavia.

Montenegro remains a **front-runner for EU accession**, albeit with pending comprehensive reforms in key areas, including those affecting UNHCR's persons of concern.

POPULATION OF CONCERN*

Refugees	172
Asylum-seekers	139
Stateless persons	458
Others of concern	1,094

TOP THREE COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN*



*Data source: UNHCR 2021 Mid-Year Statistical Report and UNHCR [data finder platform](#)

COVID-19 PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

Advocacy: UNHCR ensured inclusion of persons of concern in COVID-19 national response plans, including risk communication, COVID-19 mitigation measures and vaccinations. UNHCR also supported re-establishment of the asylum procedure, suspended in March-June 2020.

Communication with Communities: UNHCR printed and distributed WHO information materials in six languages, ensuring access to updated information related to COVID-19 and vaccinations. UNHCR and partners also maintain communication with persons of concern, directly and through Viber and WhatsApp groups established to facilitate two-way communication during the lockdown.

Health: UNHCR supported procurement of PPE and hygiene items for persons of concern and authorities and enhanced health care provision in the asylum system via procurement of medicines and engagement of two part-time doctors at the Asylum Centre.

HIGHLIGHTS

Asylum

UNHCR's activities and advocacy in the area of asylum aim to strengthen national asylum systems and related processes to provide protection and solutions to refugees and asylum-seekers.

Statelessness

Montenegro is progressing toward fulfilling the #iBelong goal to end statelessness by 2024 and all four High-Level Segment on Statelessness (HLS) pledges, by further strengthening the birth registration and the statelessness determination procedures (SDP).

Ex-Yugoslav refugees

The number of refugees from former Yugoslavia with unresolved legal status decreased from 868 to 320 in 2020-2021, thanks to cooperation between UNHCR and the Ministry of Interior (MoI). To date, 11,754 ex-Yugoslav refugees regularized their legal status in the country.



International Conference on Statelessness: Best Practices in Montenegro and France

"Statelessness can be resolved. By working together, we can make statelessness a faint memory of a by-gone era", said Gillian Triggs, UNHCR's Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, at the conference. Read the full story [here](#).

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 the 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 capacities and cross-sectorial networks.
- **Reception:** Advocate for access to adequate and protection-sensitive reception and accommodation of persons of concern and support for contingency planning. Ensure adequate and timely health care for persons with specific needs.
- **Integration:** Help develop a friendly socioeconomic environment for refugees by identifying gaps and solutions for effective access to rights/services (employment, financial inclusion, equitable education, social care and psychosocial support, including in GBV cases); mainstreaming refugees in strategic documents, laws and by-laws; and playing a catalytic role in supporting the Government to fulfil its role in supporting refugee integration.

- **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 in the UN system to ensure inclusion of persons of concern in all relevant strategic and legislative documents. UNHCR also leverages networks with the EU Delegation, European Union Agency for Asylum, Frontex, IOM, Ombudsman, private sector, financial actors and civil society to foster comprehensive approaches to protection and solutions.

Statelessness

- Montenegro has had an SDP since 2018, through which nine people have been recognized as stateless to date. UNHCR is working with MoI to further strengthen the SDP.
- In September 2020, the Embassy of Serbia, with UNHCR, introduced a tailor-made procedure for the issuance of identity documents to citizens of Serbia who are residing in Montenegro without identity documents and predictable legal status.
- The new birth registration practice for children abandoned by their mothers removed the last legal obstacle for comprehensive birth registration of persons born in Montenegro. UNHCR is capacitating MoI to secure smooth implementation of the new practice at local level.

UNHCR Presence in Montenegro

Staff:

11 National Staff
 1 International Staff
 3 UNOPS

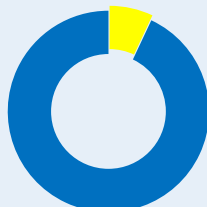
Offices:

1 Branch Office in Podgorica

Financial information (22 February 2022)

Financial requirements
USD 2.2 M

Funding gap
 90%
2.0 M



Funded
 10%
0.2 M

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UNHCR Montenegro is grateful to the donor to its 2022 programme:

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