



## LESVOS ISLAND - GREECE

### FACTSHEET

12 November 2015

## HIGHLIGHTS

**57%**

Of total arrivals by sea in Greece in 2015 passed through Lesvos

**135,000**

Total arrivals during October

**77,000**

Non-food items (NFIs) distributed since mid-September

**226**

Refugee Housing Units (RHUs) set up

### Population Trends

Total arrivals in Lesvos, 2015 (January – 11 November):  
**379,000** (out of **660,000** who have arrived to Greece)

Average daily arrivals during November in Lesvos:  
approx. **3,300** per day

Top nationalities of arrivals in Lesvos (Jan-Oct):  
Syrian Arab Republic 56%, Afghanistan 32%, Iraq 6%,  
Pakistan 2% amongst others.

**57 %** of arrivals were concentrated in Lesvos as a percentage of total arrivals in Greece

### Staffing and Presence

**USD 211,210** on staffing since the emergency in Greece

#### Staff:

29 staff currently deployed  
16 staff – recruitment ongoing

#### Presence:

**Mytilene, Moria, Kara Tepe, Skala Sikamineas, Molyvos/Oxy**

## OPERATIONAL CONTEXT

Over 45 percent of the 770,838 refugees and migrants who arrived in Europe in 2015 have landed in the Greek Island of Lesvos, which is separated from Turkey by a 10-kilometre channel and is home to 88,000 inhabitants. While there were some 379,000 arrivals in Lesvos so far this year, refugees are continuing to arrive at a rate of 3,300 per day. With the winter approaching, incidents at sea have become an almost daily occurrence. In the past weeks, 11 shipwrecks took place off Lesvos, taking the lives of 64 people and at least 12 people went missing, while over 620 people were rescued by the Hellenic coast guards. The total number of people rescued by the Coast Guards during the daily rescue operations conducted over the past weeks is even much higher.

The increasing influx of arrivals has put an extreme pressure on the island, while there are regularly more than 10,000 refugees and migrants staying in the island against a reception capacity of 2,800. Some 2,500 - 3,000 are staying in Moria (designated hotspot since 8 October) and 2,500 Kara Tepe, the two reception/registration sites on the Islands as well as 1,000 at the assembly points of Molyvos/Oxy and Skala Sykamineas. The number of refugees and migrants on the islands has been particularly high due to limited registration capacity and the ferry strike from 2 to 6 November. There is a severe lack of adequate reception in relation to shelter, sanitation, and site management exposing refugees and migrants to severe risks.

There is a lack of registration capacity and registration is not being conducted according to EU standards. Registration backlogs in Moria and Kara Tepe and the overcrowding of reception facilities have led to tensions among refugee groups and between refugees and the police. Authorities have resorted to crowd control measures.

Since the end of August, UNHCR has considerably enhanced its activities, in close cooperation with authorities and humanitarian actors, to respond to the increasing needs. However, an effective humanitarian response will not be possible unless aforementioned gaps are addressed. This is even more imperative with the onset of winter.

## MAIN ACTIVITIES

### Reception capacity on the island

**Reception of refugees and migrants is under the responsibility of the state and it is with the police and the municipality respectively responsible for the existing registration/identification centers in Moria and Kara Tepe.**

#### Achievements and impact

- UNHCR continues to support the Government, NGOs and volunteers in improving Moria, Kara Tepe and the assembly points of Molyvos/Oxy and Skala Sykamineas. Amongst others, UNHCR has been providing support to leveling, graveling, and drainage.
- UNHCR has set up 250 family Refugee Housing Units (RHUs) (172 in Kara Tepe, 62 in Moria, ten in the assembly points and six in Pikpa), four rub halls and 48 tents (in Kara Tape and Mamtamados). Covered walkways and shades have also been established in Kara Tepe and the assembly points. An additional 114 RHUs remain to be installed including in the sites of partner organizations.
- UNHCR has ensured rapid water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) interventions in the assembly points of Molyvos/Oxy and Skala Sykamineas through its partner, Samaritan's Purse.
- Cleaning services for RHUs were provided in Moria and Kara Tepe.
- UNHCR has initiated the winterization of shelters through the installation of insulated flooring for RHUs, the procurement of inner linens for the insulation of rub halls, and additional intervention for heating.

#### Identified needs and remaining gaps

- The reception sites of Moria and Kara Tepe have a capacity of 2,800 while there are regularly more than 10,000 refugees and migrants staying in the island. Additional reception capacities are even more important now that the winter is here.
- In Kara Tepe, WASH has significantly improved but needs to be further enhanced through the creation of additional separate facilities for men and women. In Moria, the WASH situation is critical and results in significant health risks. Garbage collection for both sites is urgently required. Installment of latrines, water points and showers are also required in all sites.
- The winterization of shelters needs to be accelerated.
- Urgent action is required to put in place a management of the reception sites of Moria and Kara Tepe. At the moment, refugees by themselves have to find a place to sleep in the few shelters available. This not only creates tension but also competition to the detriment of people in a more vulnerable position.
- Security, including lighting, needs to be put in place in Moria and Kara Tepe.
- In reception areas, women and unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) must be allocated separate areas to sleep.



*Winterized and shaded site in Kara Tepe*

### Transportation

#### Achievements and impact

- UNHCR provides transportation in particular from the northern shores to the various sites through eight buses and three mini vans on a 24/7 basis, thereby eliminating long and perilous walks undertaken by refugees. These buses are complemented by those provided by others humanitarian actors.

## Humanitarian assistance

### Achievements and impact

- UNHCR provides core relief and non-food items (NIFs) to refugees and migrants through direct distribution as well as through volunteers and partners. Some 50 percent of the total stocks of aid items procured by UNHCR in Greece are distributed on Lesvos. Between mid-September and beginning of November, over 79,000 aid items have been distributed on the island. UNHCR distribution complements the ones carried out by partners, NGOs and volunteers.
- UNHCR has just received the authorization to step up its presence in six strategic landing locations on the northern shores in order to provide to the disembarking refugees with lifesaving assistance. These help and support points will be fully operational on Monday, 16 November.
- UNHCR distributes high-energy bars to refugees in addition to the food distributed by other actors.
- As part of its winter operation, UNHCR will adapt the assistance listed above, including through the provision of hot meals, drinks and winter clothes (jackets, shoes, socks, gloves and thermal ear covers).
- UNHCR is working closely with partners to harmonize and avoid duplication of distribution and to ensure as many refugees as possible are reached in each location.
- A health coordination group has been established and mobile medical teams, through UNHCR's partner WAHA, are present in the north of Lesvos.



A UNHCR staff member is giving out blankets to refugees during a blanket distribution at the Kara Tepe site.

Items	Quantity
Blankets	37,000
Raincoats/ponchos	45,000
Plastic Sheets	360
Plastic Rolls	20
Hygiene Kits	1,386
Sleeping mats	3,905
Baby Care kit	840
Solar Lamp	355

### Identified needs and remaining gaps

- UNHCR is only able to target 40% of those arriving based on specific needs criteria.

## Facilitation of access to registration procedures

### Achievements and impact

- UNHCR is providing regular advice and support to authorities during the registration process. UNHCR provides information to asylum-seekers about the registration, and facilitates the prioritization of people with specific needs, including UASC, people with disabilities and survivors of shipwrecks.
- UNHCR and its partners also provide interpretation services to ensure proper understanding between the authorities and refugees during the registration.

### Identified needs and remaining gaps

- The limited registration capacity is source of backlogs and bottlenecks, putting additional pressures on the reception capacity.
- Registration needs to be carried out in compliance with EU standards. Additional human resources and Eurodac machines are required.

## Protection

### Achievements and impact

- UNHCR staff are present daily in all areas hosting refugees on the island to monitor and provide a wide range of protection activities as indicated below.

- UNHCR provides information to newly arrived refugees on registration and asylum procedures, relocation, family reunification, refugees' rights and responsibilities, and existing assistance and support programmes.
- UNHCR staff undertakes efforts to prevent and resolve family separations.
- UNHCR helps to defuse tension among the refugee communities and between the refugees and the police, which is particularly a problem when registration, assembly, and reception sites become overcrowded.
- UNHCR works to identify people with specific needs, refer them to appropriate services, and provide targeted assistance including for persons with disabilities and the elderly. This includes covering costs related to medical care (for example, wheelchairs and other walking aids); ferry and transport costs; provision of special serviced apartments for exceptional cases through its partner Praksis.
- With its partners, Save the Children and Metaction, UNHCR ensures protection and assistance for UASC. Once identified by UNHCR, UASC are counseled and referred to the government's First Reception Service in Moria, where they are accommodated pending their transfer to Athens. UNHCR's partner, Metaction, accompanies the children during their transfer to Athens, where they will be accommodated in a specialized reception facility for UASC.
- UNHCR's partner, Save the Children, established some safe spaces for children and for breastfeeding.
- UNHCR staff provides direct support to survivors of shipwrecks, including psychosocial support; reunification with family members on the island; support and follow-up for hospitalized patients and families; accommodation for survivors; follow-up and referrals to special assistance services on the mainland.
- To facilitate the communication with and counseling of refugees, UNHCR has deployed several staff members fluent in Farsi, Urdu, Pushtu and Arabic. UNHCR has also set up a partnership with the NGO Metaction which also provides interpretation services.



### Identified needs and remaining gaps

- Specific tools to provide refugees and migrants with information in particular, through boards at strategic locations adopted in accordance with an age, gender and diversity sensitive approach.
- In partnership with Mapaction, maps of Lesbos with locations of interest to refugees are being produced. These will be posted in areas where many refugees stay and will include visual symbols and information in Arabic, Farsi, Kurdish and Urdu.
- UNHCR is working with Vodafone Foundation to implement connectivity and charging solutions for refugees in Lesbos.
- Child protection activities need to be enhanced to ensure that protection and assistance provided by humanitarian actors and volunteers respond to the needs of children, including UASC.
- UNHCR and its partner Save the Children are developing child friendly messages to prevent family separation.
- UNHCR will enhance its support to the First Reception Centre, through psychosocial counselors, who will design some activities for UASC.
- Sites are not gender sensitive and expose women and children to SGBV.
- There is a lack of systematic SGBV prevention and response mechanisms.

## Support to the European Union's relocation scheme

### Achievements and impact

- In cooperation with the Hellenic Police, EASO and EU-LISA, Frontex started a one-month pilot in Moria, testing a new accelerated procedure for identifying, registering new arrivals and provision of information on access to international protection and relocation. UNHCR supports the Greek Asylum Service and EASO in the identification of asylum-seekers for relocation.
- The first group of 14 asylum-seekers out of 30 persons to be relocated were identified and processed on Lesbos. On 4 November, they were transferred to Athens and departed for Luxembourg.

## Capacity building for local authorities/communities

### Achievements and impact

- UNHCR supports the community in Lesvos in easing the impact of hundreds of thousands of refugees and migrants who have transited through the island and helps to prevent tensions with local communities. It has supported sanitation measures, garbage removal campaigns, provision of rubbish bins, minor reparation of public facilities and provided some equipment to the authorities.
- UNHCR has also recruited two engineers from the municipality and three site managers in charge of coordinating activities at the Kara Tepe and with authorities and partners in the support of survivors of shipwrecks. An expert in camp management and coordination was also provided to support the site managers.
- UNHCR is working with the Hellenic Coast Guard to facilitate the deployment of additional experienced life guards to support the ongoing rescue efforts in Lesvos. UNHCR is also providing the Hellenic Coast Guard with rescue equipment.

### Identified needs and remaining gaps

- Search and rescue at sea must be enhanced and carried out by qualified professionals.
- UNHCR will continue to provide technical support and expertise to the municipality to enhance their capacity to cope with the emergency.

## WORKING WITH PARTNERS

UNHCR works in close collaboration with 22 humanitarian actors present on Lesvos, as well as the local authorities. In addition, UNHCR support volunteer groups by providing them with core relief and non-food items (CRI/NFIs) for distribution as well as covering some of their accommodation and storage needs.

### UNHCR-funded implementing partners:

- METaction** provides a range of interpretation services for communicating with refugees, and supervises UNHCR information sessions for refugees on registration procedures and other issues.
- Praxis** provides emergency temporary accommodation in Lesvos for people with specific needs.
- International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC)** provides recruitment, deployment and human resources management of a pool of experts for UNHCR's affiliated workforce, as well as protection activities at the borders.
- Save the Children** provides safe-areas for children, capacity-building for local child protection partners, and distribution of aid items for children.
- Samaritan's Purse** is involved in water, sanitation and hygiene, as well as provision of basic emergency services and distribution of aid items and care services.
- Women & Health Alliance (WAHA)** runs mobile medical teams that cover northern Lesvos.

Coordination mechanisms have been put in place on Lesvos to ensure efficiency among humanitarian actors.

Type of coordination mechanisms	Frequency	Chair / contact details	Co-Chair
General Coordination - Lesvos	Weekly	Ministry of Aegean/ the Mayor's Office	UNHCR
Kara Tepe - site coordination	Weekly	Municipality	UNHCR
Moria - site coordination	Weekly	Hellenic Police	UNHCR
North - coordination meeting	Weekly	Municipal Authorities	UNHCR
Protection Working Group	Weekly	UNHCR	
Food & NFIs Working Group	Weekly	UNHCR	
WASH - Working Group	Weekly	UNHCR	
Health Working Meeting	Weekly	MSF	
Communication with Communities	Weekly	Interviews	

## UNHCR PRESENCE

UNHCR’s team on Lesvos is currently composed of 29 people and will soon reach a total of 40 staff members. The team consists of a range of experts, including protection and field officers, child protection, community services, CCCM, site planners, and engineers.

UNHCR’s office is located in Mytilini but teams are present daily in all the main strategic locations around the island including Kara Tape, Moria, Skala Sikamineas and Molyvos/Oxy. UNHCR’s presence in the north continues to be further expanded.

## FINANCIAL INFORMATION

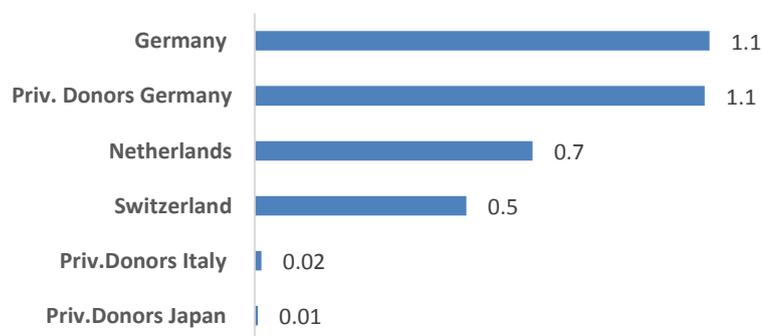
UNHCR’s financial requirements for its response in Greece, as part of the [Special Mediterranean Initiative \(June 2015 – December 2016\)](#) amounts to **USD 27.2 million**. The Special Mediterranean Initiative outlines the Office’s response to the refugee crisis in Europe, and also incorporates targeted programmes in countries of asylum or transit in Africa and the North Africa sub-region.

In addition, UNHCR is requesting an additional **USD 34.2 million** for activities in Greece as part of the [Winterization Plan for the Refugee Crisis in Europe \(November 2015 – February 2016\)](#).

UNHCR operation on Lesvos represents **40 per cent** of UNHCR total budget for the operation in Greece.

As of 11 November, **USD 26.7 million** has been received for UNHCR’s Special Mediterranean Initiative, including winterization activities, for all affected countries in Europe, Africa and North Africa. This includes **USD 3.7 million** for Greece.

**Earmarked Funding for Greece in million USD**



UNHCR is very grateful for the financial support provided by donors who have contributed to their activities with un-earmarked and broadly earmarked funds as well as for those who have contributed directly to the situation.

