

# MULTI-SECTOR NEEDS ASSESSMENT OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES IN GREECE

Athens, Lesvos, Chios, Kos  
July 5-18 2015



**Save the Children**

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We fight for their rights. We help them  
fulfill their potential.

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# Multi-sector Needs Assessment of Refugees and Migrants in Greece

## I. Executive Summary

Europe, and Greece in particular, is facing a humanitarian emergency as the number of migrants and refugees arriving on its shores has increased dramatically. Authorities and agencies on the ground are struggling to respond effectively. Over 109,000 migrants and refugees have reached Greece by sea this year; with the figure expected to rise to 200,000 by the end of the year. Migrants and refugees coming to Greece are coming to a country struggling with an economic crisis, as a result of which the Greek authorities are not able to expand or scale up their services to meet the demand posed by the influx of refugees. With over 1000 of new arrivals daily, and with migration figures set to rise in the coming months there is a distinct lack of capacity on the ground to respond to the current situation.

A humanitarian needs assessment was undertaken by Save the Children (SC) staff (5th-18th July 2015) to determine the humanitarian needs of refugees and migrants arriving on the Greek Islands by boat from Turkey. The team started the assessment in Athens and travelled to the Aegean islands of Lesbos, Chios and Kos, the three islands hosting the greatest number of refugees and migrants and where there is an alarming absence of actors addressing their basic needs. Many people have experienced life-threatening journeys on their way to Greece and arrive with hardly any belongings and a small amount of cash. They are extremely vulnerable.

Save the Children is initiating a multi-sectoral response focusing on child protection, shelter and basic food and non-food items in order to meet the needs of refugees and migrants fleeing conflict in countries such as Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq.

Our response to the crisis in Greece is part of Save the Children's wider work addressing children on the move. We are on the ground in countries where conflict and poverty triggers children to leave their homes (such as EL Salvador, Senegal, Syria, Iraq, Myanmar,) to countries of transit (Libya, Egypt, Greece, Italy and Serbia) to countries that children are heading to (ie Germany, Sweden, and to a lesser extent Greece and Italy). Save the Children is working with key partners to address the needs of and to protect children who have been trafficked, children who migrate, children who have been displaced by conflict and natural and disasters and asylum-seeking and refugee children. If children do not have access to relevant care and protection systems they could be placed at greater risk of harm and/or exploitation.

For Save the Children the best interests of the child should always be a primary consideration in deciding on the relocation of children, particularly unaccompanied children.

**“Save the Children’s assessment found that men, women and children arriving in Greece face extremely dire conditions: overcrowded camps, informal settlements and detention centres with no facilities/services, unsanitary conditions and inadequate access to food and healthcare.”**



Going forward, Save the Children will be calling on the European Union to:

- Increase the number of relocations from Italy and Greece and to put in place a permanent system, to address future emergencies.
- Provide Italy and Greece more support to protect every unaccompanied child, at the point of arrival and beyond.
- Share the responsibility for the care and protection of vulnerable children who cross the Mediterranean.

## Humanitarian Context & Immediate Needs

Across the islands of Lesbos, Chios, Samos and Kos aid agencies on the ground are currently providing only limited coverage for refugees and migrants. The basic needs of around 5,000 people on Lesbos, 2,000 on Chios and 1,000 on Kos are currently not being met and they are in critical need of emergency humanitarian assistance. Save the Children's assessment found that men, women and children arriving in Greece face extremely dire conditions: overcrowded camps, informal settlements and detention/reception centres with no facilities/services, unsanitary conditions and inadequate access to food and healthcare.

There is no camp site management structure in place across any of the informal camp sites in Lesbos, Chios and Kos, which inhibits an efficient and comprehensive delivery of services. Many children told us that food and water were limited and they were eating only once a day. As one man said: "it's the survival of the fittest." Child protection risks are very high, there is very little access to adequate shelter, very poor quality water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities exist in the camps and diarrhoeal diseases are very common.

There is no formal local coordination structure in place across most of the islands. Nonetheless, there is an active civil society within Greece, where motivated and committed volunteers are often the first to respond to the needs of new arrivals and offer viable opportunities for partnering on a response.

## Key findings by sector

- **Child Protection:** Child protection risks are extremely high and include risk of drowning, physical abuse, exploitation, sexual abuse of vulnerable children, as they often travel unaccompanied or use shared toilets, tents or shared rooms in detention centres, sometimes with single men that are strangers to them. The protection of unaccompanied minors (UAM) is a major concern as children are placed in large groups in (locked) detention/reception centres in cramped cells, then transferred to care centres on the mainland, which they usually leave to continue their north-bound journey, exposing themselves to further risk of sexual exploitation and trafficking.
- **Shelter and Non-food items:** 90% of the affected population in informal camps have no access to adequate shelter. Those with cash, walk many kilometres to local shops to purchase small tents. People arrive with very few personal belongings, mostly the clothes they are wearing, as there isn't the space in the small dinghies/boats with up to 50 people crammed into them. There is broad agreement amongst all actors

that all informal settlements will be unfit for the cold island weather after the summer.

- **Food Security and Livelihoods:** There are erratic and inconsistent food distributions (of low nutritional value) across all informal camps in Lesbos and Chios. Distributions are poorly organised resulting in young men accessing the food and more vulnerable groups – children, the elderly, women and the disabled – often going without. A number of people interviewed in informal camps complained of not having eaten for days.
- **Health & Nutrition:** Main causes of morbidity are diarrhoeal diseases (esp. amongst the under-5s), respiratory tract infections, dermatological issues (rashes, burns, and sunburns), dehydration and some chronic diseases primarily amongst adults. There are considerable health needs, largely addressed through MdM's and MSF's current operations in all detention/reception centres<sup>1</sup> in Lesbos, Chios and Kos and through polyclinics<sup>2</sup> in Athens, as well as through their scale up to provide mobile health clinics across informal refugee camps. Though limited data is available, the assessment team did not record significant concern over the nutritional status of the affected population.
- **Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH):** Extremely inadequate coverage and poor quality WASH facilities exist in all informal camps across the islands. Open defecation practices and pools of stagnant water in the informal camps are common as are poor hygiene practices and limited solid waste management. The IRC and MSF have committed to address WASH needs in all informal camp sites in these key islands.
- **Education:** No educational support exists for children on the islands. Even so, given the highly transient nature of the refugee population, most education-in-emergencies programmes would not be suitable, though opportunities for innovative education programming on the islands and in Athens could be explored.

In the next week Save the Children will be initiating an integrated multi sector response to address gaps in child protection, food security, shelter and non-food items provision in multi locations that include Athens and Lesbos, Chios and Kos. Our response will be delivered directly and through partners. Save the Children will provide immediate, life-saving assistance, winterisation and strengthening of local structures throughout the response which can support the next large wave of migration (seasonal peak April-Sept).

## 2. Methodology

An assessment was conducted by a team of five Save the Children (SC) staff from the 5th to 18th July, 2015, to determine the humanitarian needs of refugees and migrants arriving on the Greek islands by boat from Turkey.

The SC team started the assessment in Athens and travelled to Lesbos (8-11th), Chios (11-14th) and Kos (15-17th), the three Aegean islands hosting the greatest number of refugees and migrants and where there is an alarming absence of actors addressing their basic needs.

This multi-sector needs assessment was based on qualitative and quantitative data that was collected over a period of 2 weeks. Secondary data review was completed by ACAPS at SC's request. Primary data collection methodologies included Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with local authorities i.e. the police, coastguard, municipality, locals actors (CSOs, INGOs), as well as Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with men, women, girls and boys, individual and family interviews, but also case studies and observation.

Qualitative data in the form of interviews with 344 refugees and migrants (116 women, 148 men, 43 boys and 37 girls) was gathered during our assessment and allows us to present here the needs and gaps of children caught up in this crisis.

## 3. Context

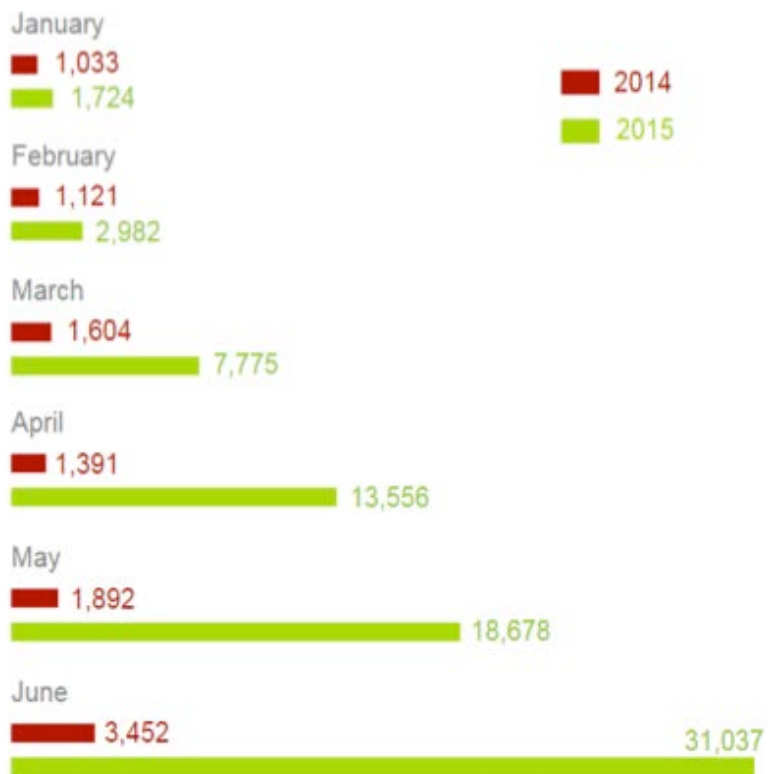
The number of migrants arriving on Greek shores soared by 408% over the first six months of 2015 compared with the same period last year (UNHCR Greece). The majority are Syrian, Afghans and Iraqis fleeing persecution, violence and conflict. Many people feel they have no choice but to leave their country of origin and they arrive in Greece full of hope, only to find a country in crisis with little to offer in terms of basic services. The families we met tell us they have risked everything to come to Europe to give their children a safer and brighter future.

It is no exaggeration to say that Greek authorities are overwhelmed and the national capacity to respond to the influx of migrants and refugees is limited and overwhelmed. The Greek financial crisis has put a freeze on resources, which limits their response capacity. For example, there has been a freeze on recruitment in the public sector – which has impacted the ability of the police and asylum services to scale up to deal with the influx of refugees and migrants.

Lesvos, an island of about 80,000 inhabitants, is experiencing the brunt of the refugee crisis, as more than 25,000 people have arrived since the start of the year —a staggering six-fold increase from the same period in 2014 (AP). The economic crisis is having a direct impact on public service facilities in Lesbos. For example, hospitals and health centres in Lesbos have been forced to close (Mytilene Hospital is the only facility open on the island), a hiring freeze has been placed on civil servants, so the state mechanism responsible for scaling up is not able to address the needs of the rapidly increasing numbers of refugees and migrants.



### Monthly Boat Arrivals in Greece 2014 vs 2015



Source: UNHCR Greece



“Every day (it’s like) a new village is born.” - Spyros Galinos, Lesvos Mayor

With this many vulnerable people arriving every day in Lesvos alone, it’s clear that local authorities are at a breaking point and relying on the ability of local Greek authorities and committed local volunteers to meet even the most basic needs of refugees is unrealistic. The mayor of Lesvos put it best: “I feel like I am juggling 2 bombs – in one hand is the refugee crisis, in the other is the economic crisis. I don’t know which one will go off first, I can see the fuse going and I’m begging for someone to stop it, because both my hands are full”.

## Population Demographics

UNHCR has reported that over 2/3 of migrants and refugees in the first six months of the year were from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq and Somalia, i.e. countries affected by conflict and violence, whilst as time passes this majority keeps growing, with June 2015 figures pointing at over 85% of migrants and refugees coming from conflict-affected countries, with 1 in 4 being women or children<sup>3</sup>.

Countries of origin: January-June 2015

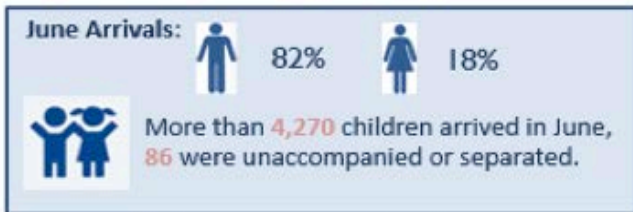
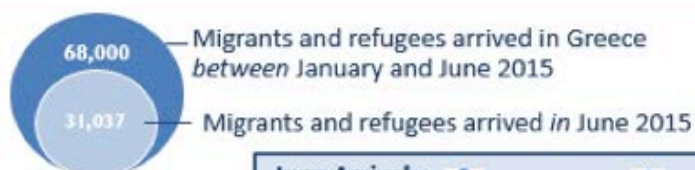


According to Amnesty International, in 2014, 1,097 unaccompanied minors (UAMs) arrived on the islands and crossed the Evros border. However, a lack of screening procedures and an overall non-compliance to First Reception procedures in Greece has resulted in a failure to identify members of vulnerable groups such as unaccompanied minors (please see registration process further below). Between Jan-May 2015, 216 UAM are reported to have arrived in Greece, but the actual numbers are likely to be much higher as a large number of children claim to be older than they are or to be travelling with family members (most of the time these are in fact families or single men they met during their journey to Greece). Equally there is no specific data available on the number of injured, disabled, and pregnant women.

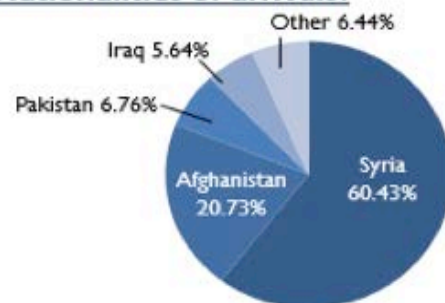
Refugees are not a homogenous population, they have different needs depending on their gender, age, finances, physical and mental abilities and reasons for leaving their country of origin. Vulnerable groups include female-headed families, pregnant women, severe and chronic medical cases, unaccompanied minors, victims of trafficking or at risk of trafficking and exploitation, as well as victims of torture or other forms of gender, sexual, physical or psychological violence.

### What's in a name? De Facto Refugees or Economic Migrants?

The terminology used to describe the people arriving in Greece is a very political issue, as EU countries' policy and responsibilities towards the two groups are different. According to our findings, the arrivals into Greece are part of a mixed migration flow, constituting of two main categories, namely asylum seekers/refugees and voluntary, economic migrants<sup>4</sup>. However, as the majority of those arriving in Greece are fleeing persecution, conflict and war, they fit more accurately within the definition of a refugee<sup>5</sup>. To highlight that this fact, this report will primarily refer to this migrating population as 'refugees', although may occasionally revert to using the terminology of 'migrants and refugees', where relevant<sup>6</sup>.

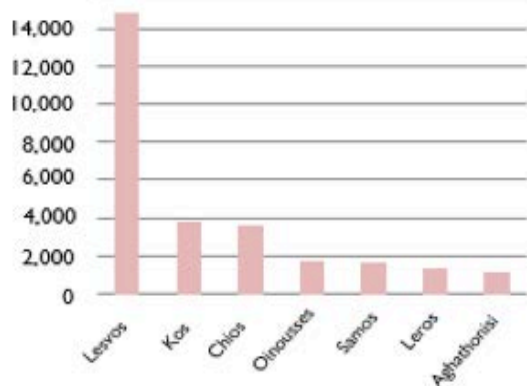


### Nationalities of arrivals:

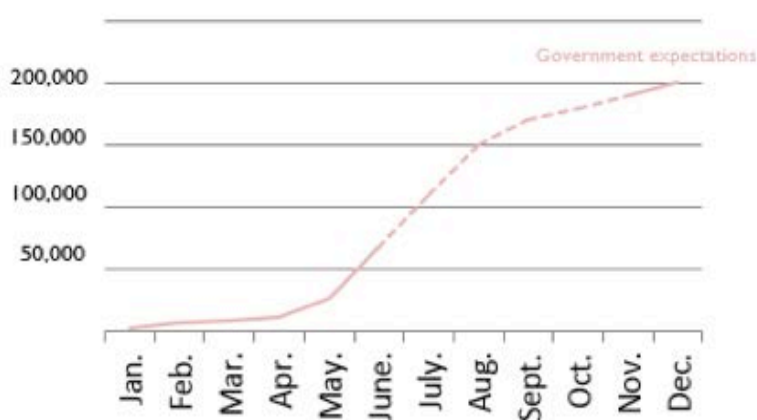


99% of migrants arrived by sea

### Main entry points of new arrivals:



### Timeline and forecast of new arrivals in 2015:



## Tracking the route to Europe (via Greece)

Most refugees/migrants arrive in Greece via Turkey, which they reach through these key routes:

### Syrians

- Route A: From Syria people cross the border into Lebanon and then onto Turkey by either taking a ferry to Izmir or a flight to Istanbul.
- Route B: Syrians cross the land border into Turkey

The route chosen depends on where in Syria refugees come from, as well as their nationality, as for Palestinians it can be more difficult to cross the borders in legal ways, so they're more likely to choose a more dangerous path.

### Other nationalities

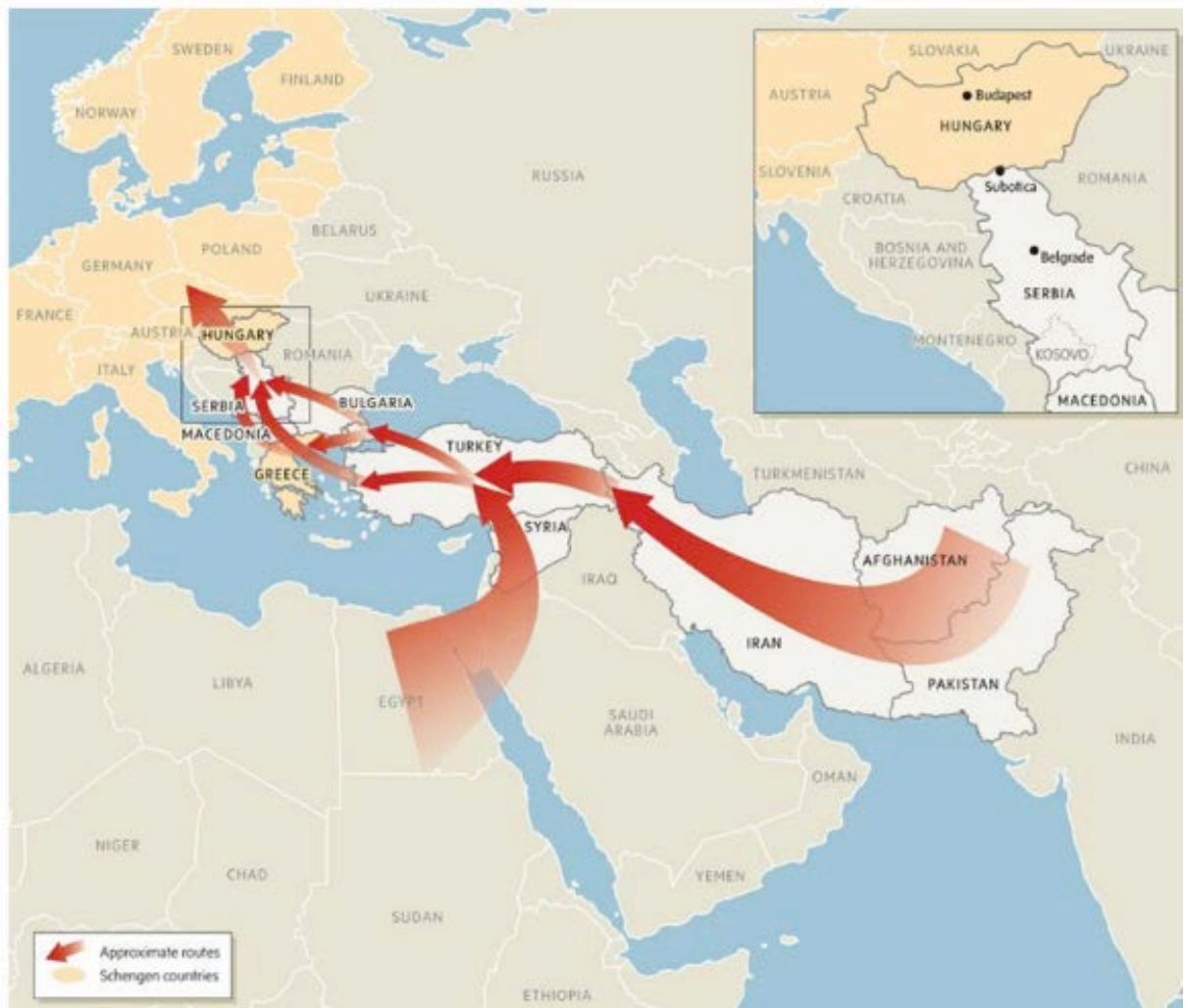
- Route C: Iraqis tend to cross the Northern Iraq border into Turkey, whilst refugees and migrants from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, usually travel through Iran, then Turkey, a journey that takes a minimum of 2-3 weeks when taken directly or a lot longer if the refugee/migrant has to remain in Turkey for a period of time to work, so as to raise the funds to continue his/her journey.

The main refugee/migrant gathering areas are Istanbul and Izmir, whilst the Basmane area of Izmir, where most refugees pass through, serves as a smugglers' hub.

To cross the short stretch of sea (a few miles) from Turkey to one of the Greek islands, smugglers charge US\$1,000 USD per person, whilst the onwards journey from Athens to Northern Europe costs an additional US\$2,000-4,000 in smugglers' fees alone.

Though most refugees to Greece tend to head to the islands of the Eastern Mediterranean, a small minority come from Egypt en route to the islands of Southern Aegean (mostly Crete), or cross over land through Turkey's North Western border with Greece. The latter is an almost impassable border and is a very dangerous option. The number of land-crossings here are significantly lower, because of the following deterrents; the river Evros which runs 200km across this border (many people have lost their lives trying to cross it), the recently-constructed 10km barbed-wire fence and the push-backs refugees still suffer at the hands of police at that border.

All the aforementioned travel routes expose refugee men, women and children to the high risk of trafficking, abuse, exploitation and physical and sexual violence by smugglers and well-established criminal networks.



Map source: The Globe and Mail

## Arriving in Greece

Day and night, small inflatable dinghies each containing 30-50 refugees/migrants, land on the shores of Lesvos, Chios, Kos and many islands of the Dodecanese.

Despite the low quality of boats and cheap life jackets refugees travel with, the loss of life in the Eastern Mediterranean migration path has been minimal compared to that of the Central Mediterranean. The smaller distances, less rough seas, and no pushbacks contribute to that. But refugees arrive exhausted, often wet, with little if any belongings, confused, scared and often unsure of their whereabouts. At the time of our assessment there was no one there to meet arriving refugees, other than the occasional well-meaning local, or to offer them water, dry clothes or basic information as to where they are and where they should be heading to. We spoke to people, including very young children, who had to walk 70 kms (40 miles) to reach assistance.

It is the responsibility of the coastguard to record basic information on new arrivals. They would then contact the police, handing them the list of names of refugees, as well as the responsibility for them. The refugees normally then have to make their own way to the informal sites or registration centres. What happens between reaching the island and receiving the papers, which enable them to continue their journey (what registration process will be followed, how long the process will take, where they'll stay, what services, if any, they'll receive etc.) depends on a range of random factors, the only constant being the poor reception refugees will receive and the ad hoc nature of the process(es) currently followed.

The First Reception System that was originally designed by the Greek authorities, involved a team of professionals (a legal advisor, doctor, nurse psychologist, social worker) welcoming refugees in purpose-built, high standard reception facilities prior to them having any contact with the police, who would then issue them with their relevant papers within 1-3 days, making special provisions for UAMs. If the system could be characterised as underfunded and under-resourced from the start, it is now utterly overwhelmed.

**“Smugglers are soul traders. They don’t care if you live or die in the middle of the sea. All they care about is money. You just need to stand there and tens of smugglers will gather around you. They will decide if we travel through Izmir or Bodrum according to the “death atmosphere”. If there have been deaths in the sea in recent days they would avoid the Izmir route, which is more dangerous”.** *Aida\* from Syria (name changed)*

### **Onward journey**

As documented by UNHCR’s July 2015 report, the onward movement of refugees and migrants from Greece to Northern Europe requires long and dangerous journeys, often at the hands of smugglers, through the Balkans and onwards through Hungary. The number of those moving through this route has sharply increased since the beginning of June, with over 1,000 people crossing every day from Greece through FYROM (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) to Serbia. Prior to recent changes in the law, refugees and migrants crossing The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia were not authorized to use public transport, and as a result, they have been walking on the railway tracks and walking or cycling along the emergency lane of the highway, resulting in various tragic accidents. A new law allows people to travel legally in the country for up to 72 hours after registering and receiving documentation. The Governments concerned have requested international support to ensure that the protection and humanitarian needs of the refugees and migrants are being addressed, in particular in the area of reception, asylum and migration management.

According to a 07/07/15 MSF article, a recent enhancement of border enforcement by the FYROM police and Special Forces, has led more than 2,000 people travelling towards northern Europe to be blocked at Idomeni, with some now attempting to cross at other border points. Amongst them are highly vulnerable groups, such as elderly or disabled people, pregnant women, and children under five years old. A number of them are “living in squalid conditions, staying outside in the bush or at the train station, without any shelter, food or access to hygiene facilities.”

## 4. The Legal Framework and Responsible Ministries

### The Registration Process: “First Reception Centres”

Greece operates a twofold system for applications for international protection, depending on whether an application has been lodged before or after June 2013. This determines if the asylum procedure will be handled by the police or by the Asylum Service, a First Reception Service and an Appeals Authority.

First reception/detention centres provide the framework for refugees and migrants to be received and processed in the first instance. At this time an initial decision as to whether they are refugees, migrants, unaccompanied minors and if they should be returned home is also made here. The average length of stay in reception centres would be about 20 days. In theory these reception centres should provide a full service that includes age assessment, medical checks, shelter, food and a place of worship. Due to a lack of funds however these services are mainly provided by external providers.



In addition, out of the 9 existing first Reception Centres, the Evros reception centre (in NE Greece) has the only functional First Reception centre offering a full range of services (including age assessment which identifies who is an UAM). The remainder, 2 of which are on the islands of Lesbos and Chios, resemble more closely detention centres, as they lack the full range of services and detain people until further determination on their status.

Due to the large numbers of refugees that have recently arrived and the lack of First Reception Centres (as in Kos) or spaces within them, people are forced to stay in makeshift camps until spaces become available in the first reception centres (or other detention centres) in order to have their finger prints taken. The process is further prolonged due to low availability of staff with often only two or three police officers present to process the applications in the receptions/detention centres. Often refugees are given just a note indicating they should go to Athens to be processed by the police there.

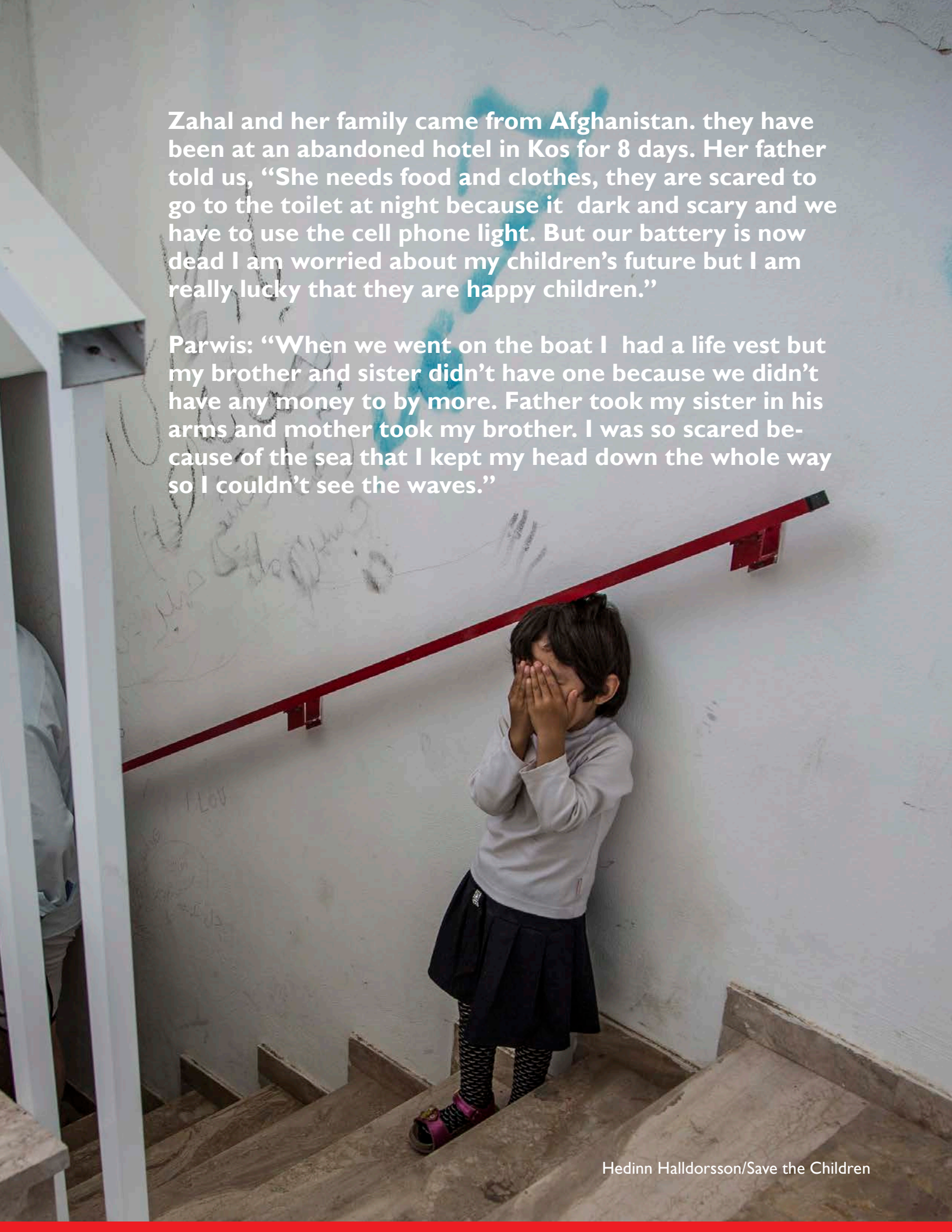
In some places, the local authorities have tried to come up with creative ways of coping with the huge increase of refugees and keeping a steady flow: In Chios for example people have a number written on their hand so each boat can be classed as a group and processed together. People stay for 1-2 nights in the open area outside the detention centre until their numbers are called. They are then processed inside the detention centre which normally takes 1 day, due to the local police having been particularly proactive in cutting down bureaucracy and using technology more to support the process. The police grant Syrians a 6-month renewable residency permit<sup>7</sup>, while all non-Syrians receive a 1-month expulsion note<sup>8</sup>.

Refugees also have the option of formally applying for a travel document (costing Euros 80), which would allow them to move freely within Europe and apply for asylum in a different European country (without the fear of being sent back to Greece, as per the Dublin Convention). Having this travel document, would also mean that refugees are not being left at the mercy of traffickers and smugglers. However, this travel document can take months to be issued and a lack of information about this option, as well as fear of being sent back to Greece means that the majority of refugees opt to travel illegally to northern Europe.



Zahal and her family came from Afghanistan. they have been at an abandoned hotel in Kos for 8 days. Her father told us, “She needs food and clothes, they are scared to go to the toilet at night because it dark and scary and we have to use the cell phone light. But our battery is now dead I am worried about my children’s future but I am really lucky that they are happy children.”

Parwis: “When we went on the boat I had a life vest but my brother and sister didn’t have one because we didn’t have any money to by more. Father took my sister in his arms and mother took my brother. I was so scared because of the sea that I kept my head down the whole way so I couldn’t see the waves.”





Noor\*, 33 years old, from Syria  
With her son Anas\*, 5

We paid \$1000 for each person so \$5000 for my family. You must pay the smuggler directly for the boat ride otherwise you cannot go on the boat. We were 45 people on the boat, I was so scared when I saw all the people that were on the boat I started crying really loudly. These days I cry all the time and I know my family feel bad for me, but I can't help it.

My son Ahmad misses school so much. He loved being in school and his favourite subject was Maths. We have a long way in front of us, we don't know what awaits us, or if we will be happy or sad. But we are doing this for the children, with the hope that the children will have a peaceful home and a better education. I hope that when we reach Denmark they won't send us back to Greece."

Hedinn Halldorsson/Save the Children

## 5. Key Findings

### A summary breakdown per sector follows below

There is no site management structure in place across any of the informal camp sites in Lesbos, Chios and Kos and there is no comprehensive local coordination structure in place. Confusion prevails amongst refugees and the various actors responsible for them.

Refugees arriving onto the Aegean islands are transiting, hoping to travel quickly to Athens and then further on to Europe. They are staying for between 2 - 15 days on average on the islands, depending on their nationality (there is an EU directive in place to fast track nationals of Syria) and the efficiency of the reception/registration system at the specific island. At any one time, around 5,000 refugees on Lesbos, 2,000 on Chios and 1,000 on Kos do not have their basic needs met and are in critical need of emergency humanitarian assistance.

**“My mum feels guilty that she had to take us away from our home, from our friends. She cries every day and talks to herself. I cry every time I see her cries- she is piece of me and I am a piece of her.”** - 8 year old Syrian girl

### A. Protection

Women and children in particular face many protection risks on their journey to Greece and onwards. Lack of basic services and adequate protective measures (shelter, adequate toilets, clean water, health facilities and safe spaces) put children and women at high risk of sexual harassment, physical violence and trafficking. Unaccompanied minors are at particular risk. During Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and individual interviews carried out by the assessment team, children spoke about their fear of being kidnapped by strangers, of having heard about men taking children to sell their organs. One boy explained that he felt uncomfortable passing by single men in the camp or when he goes to the toilet in the camp as they stare at him. One girl described how a man had grabbed her hand while going to the toilet, but she managed to run away from him.

The risk to young children and women of sexual abuse, in this context is high: lack of adequate sanitation facilities means that women and children have to share toilets with men or are forced to defecate in the open; lack of resources and formal camps forces women and children to share tents with other single men, often strangers to them. In Athens this risk is even higher as women and children stay in squares and parks that are frequented by drug dealers, traffickers and prostitution rings. During the period of the assessment, a 10 years old boy was raped in one of the parks in Athens.

Unaccompanied minors (UAMs), once in the hands of the authorities, are sometimes placed in detention with adults, again exposing them to risks of sexual and physical harassment. Greece only has 323 places in shelter facilities for unaccompanied minors. This lack of spaces has led to prolonged detention of UAMs (up to 3 weeks and more), whilst suitable shelter is being identified for them, as well as under-reporting of their UAM status by the children.

Even when suitable shelter is identified, most children end up leaving the shelters soon after they have arrived, in an attempt to reach the original destination, often in Northern Europe. In a struggle to survive they often end up exposing themselves to further risks of being trafficked and exploited.

### **Impact on psycho-social well being**

Refugees and migrants interviewed expressed deep levels of distress and anxiety. Women described how they are prone to crying regularly. Men said they became more aggressive against their children and that they felt unable to manage their emotions. Headaches, stomach-aches, feelings of guilt, and deep concerns about how to raise their children in different cultures were reported amongst men and women.

Children interviewed recounted stories of war and death and described the terrifying journey crossing the sea over to Greece. Parents reported symptoms like bedwetting, nightmares, fear and extreme attachment has been reported. Most of the children had been out of school for years and have a distorted view of what constitutes 'normality'.

### **B. Shelter and Non-Essential Food Items (NFIs)**

The provision of shelter for refugees is limited across all sites. Detention/Reception Centres have prefabricated containers where refugees stay. Informal camps at Mersinidi (Chios) and Kara Tepe (Lesvos), have a small number of canvas tents and new arrivals use what little cash they have to purchase small, cheap recreational tents from local stores. The vast majority of people are sleeping rough, some on soiled mattresses, others on battered mats, and others on nothing at all. Refugees are asking for basic bedding (blankets, mattresses) as the nights on the islands are cold even in the summer. The population at these sites are transient, intending to move on to Athens and then further into Europe as soon as they can. There is, therefore, a particular need for comprehensive coverage of emergency shelter needs across all sites. Even sites with prefabricated containers are significantly over capacity and people resort to sleeping rough outside.

Across the informal camps in Lesvos, Chios and Kos, there is no electricity and hardly any lighting. This presents a range of protection concerns. There is no privacy - women have to breastfeed in front of strangers as, more often than not, two or three families share one shelter. Scorpions and snakes have been reported in the camps. On Chios, in Mersinidi camp, refugees were sleeping in the graveyard next to which 8 canvas tents were set up to accommodate 100s of them, the refugees are now trying to cope by having women and children sleep in one small prefabricated container, whilst many of the men sleep outdoors.

The main NFIs requested are simple bedding (even cardboards to sleep on), nappies, nappy rash creams, baby wipes and hygiene items (soap, shampoo etc).

### C. Food Security and Livelihoods

Food distributions are limited and erratic across all sites. The formal sites - those being the detention/reception centres - have more structured and regular food distributions. In Lesbos and Chios the police employ a catering service to distribute food three times a day. However, many beneficiaries complained about the lack of consistency, regularity, quantity, quality and cultural appropriateness of the food distributions. In informal camps in particular they tend to be inequitable, due to the distribution method allowing greater access by young men, who rush to the point of distribution, whilst more vulnerable individuals (elderly, women, children and the disabled) often end up unserved. Refugees held no information as to when or how a distribution will take place. There is also uncertainty over how long these distributions will continue since the catering company has reportedly not been paid by the Government in 3-6 months.

Few people reported that they have not eaten for the last two days, others buy their own food (mainly bread and water) from a basic in-camp canteen. Even when they have access to the markets, many refugees either don't have the money to buy food or they try to save their cash for their long journey ahead.

In Kos, food is distributed only once a day by a group of volunteers who receive free rations of poor quality food from hotels and restaurants. Despite the food distribution in Kos having been organised by unskilled volunteers only a few weeks ago (before which refugees received no food at all) the distribution in this area is somewhat better organised and egalitarian.

In Athens, refugees are mostly left to fend for themselves, whilst some are receiving one meal a day in soup kitchens run by local charities refugees and Greek alike.

### D. Health

There is limited primary health care coverage across migrant and refugee sites. Migrants and refugees do not get a health screening as standard on arrival at formal and informal camps. MdM manage clinics in the Detention Centres of Moria (Lesvos) and Mersinidi (Chios).

Common morbidities are reported to include acute respiratory tract infections (ARTs), fever and diarrhoea, as well as dermatological problems (sunburns, rashes), as well as trauma from people getting injured jumping off boats onto the rocky shores. There has been a marked difference in the demographics of the camp population over the last six months. At the end of 2014 the majority of new arrivals were 18 – 35 year olds. In the second half of 2015 MdM recorded new arrivals including a larger number of neonates and elderly people (as old as 95 years). With an older population, more chronic disease is observed including hypertension, diabetes and renal failure. MdM has reported that 5 - 7% of the affected population have disabilities (through conflict-related wounds). MdM's priority is to provide primary health care services within the detention centre, as this is what they are authorised to do by the Greek authorities. However, in the afternoons they conduct outreach into the informal camp, triaging cases for follow up in the clinic.

The MoH has a legal obligation to offer access to health facilities to everyone. In practice most refugees in need of serious medical attention by hospital staff, are referred by NGOs or volunteer doctors. MdM does have a referral system in place with the hospital in Lesvos and Chios, whilst MSF operate a small clinic in the abandoned Captain Elias hotel in Kos and are scaling up to manage mobile clinics in Kara Tepe in Lesvos. Vaccination rates amongst the transient population are unknown but such a program wouldn't lend itself well to being implemented to a population on the move anyway.

## **E. Nutrition**

The assessment team did not observe any visible signs of malnutrition incl. micronutrient deficiencies among the affected population (e.g. thin/wasted children, bilateral oedema), however MdM has registered a few cases of malnutrition in Chios.

MdM reported that women in Moria are continuing to breastfeed their infants, though it was observed that many women hold untrue and deterring beliefs about the practice (e.g. that if they're sick, they'll pass on their illness to their baby). Though MdM claimed to support women with breastfeeding during consultations, it should be noted that they also provide one bottle of infant formula to mothers as they leave the detention centre. They claim this serves as a preventive measure, as women on the move might not be able to breastfeed for variety or reasons, so they are recommending that it only be used as an emergency measure.

## **F. WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene)**

WASH conditions across all sites hosting migrants and refugees are extremely poor. Informal camps, where most refugees are hosted, have a) restricted or no access to running water for washing b) limited and inappropriate sanitation facilities that are filthy and often dysfunctional, with open defecation widely evident in the informal camps and c) limited supply of drinking water. New arrivals purchase bottled water at inflated prices, if they have cash. Water trucking is supplying Moria's informal camp with drinking water, though there are concerns by the refugee population (as well INGOs' WASH experts) over its quality.

Solid waste management is partly taking place in some of the sites - notably Moria Detention Centre and Kara Tepe informal camp - but not in a comprehensive way. Symptomatic of a transient population, authorities highlighted their concern over the fact the facilities provided were not used respectfully and the burden of keeping the camps clean and well-maintained was too heavy for the municipality.

Detention/Reception Centres themselves have access to clean water and limited sanitation facilities, whilst MSF-Belgium-managed WASH facilities in the abandoned Captain Elias Hotel, in Kos are decent, compared to those informal camps of the other islands. Latrines and bathing facilities were clean and functional, even if not sufficient in number for the size of the population they served.

In Pedio tou Areos, a central Athens park, there are two chemical toilets for the 100s of refugees and they wash themselves by using a garden hose attachment at the park's taps. Stagnant water and human waste attract mosquitoes, and some of the children who

walk barefoot in the park are covered in insect bites. With old clothes, garbage and waste scattered everywhere and with summer temperatures reaching as high as 38 degrees celsius (100.4°F), the sites are unfit for habitation but continue being used in lack of an alternative.

**“I have never been to school and for the last two years I was taking care of my younger siblings (4 and 5 years old). I have nightmares, I wake up in the middle of the night screaming but I never recall my dreams or that I was screaming. I wets my bed occasionally but since our rip on the boat I wet my bed every night. The mattress we use has been used by tens of people who arrived to Moria settlement before.”**

*- Ahlam\*, 10 year old girl (name changed)*



## **G. Education**

The majority of young children (80%) interviewed have only been in school for one year, if at all. Most Syrian children had been out of school for 3-4 years. Those who were in Turkey either had access to poor quality education or had to stay home to take care of other siblings or work to support their family.

On the islands children stay on average for 1-2 weeks, usually moving between from a transit settlement to the informal camps, onto the detention centre, before heading to Athens. There, children might stay for longer before they leave the country; but they're still highly mobile - usually between the different squares (Victoria, Omonia squares) and Pedion tou Areos park.

Children applying for asylum and refugee children are able to attend free public schools (where in the recent past there have been EU-funded school integration programmes). However, most refugees have little interest in integrating in local society, joining a school etc, as they're hoping to settle in northern Europe. There are some organizations that are providing mobile schools (ARSIS and PRAKSIS) mainly teaching the language of the country of destination.





## 6. List of Abbreviations

ACAPS	Assessment Capacity Project
ARSI	Association for the Social Support of Youth
AP	Associated Press
AUEB	Athens University of Economics and Business
CSO(s)	Civil Society Organisation(s)
EU	European Union
FGDs	Focus group Discussions
FYROM	Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
INGO(s)	International Non-governmental Agencies
IRC	International Rescue Committee
KII	Key Informant Interview
MdM	Médecins du Monde
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
NFIs	Shelter and non essential food items
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and
PRAXIS	A non-governmental and non- profitmaking cultural organisation
SC	Save the Children
UAM	Unaccompanied Minors
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WASH	Water, Sanitation, Hygiene

## 7. Annexes

Available upon request to [Sarah Tyler, Head of Communications, International Programs](#):

1. Key Informant Information (KII)
2. External Capacity
3. Reception Facilities for Asylum Seekers and UASC
4. Secondary Data Review (ACAPS 7th July)

## 7. List of References

1. Human Rights Watch (July 11, 2015): [Greece Humanitarian Crisis on the Islands; Urgent EU Support Needed to Ensure Basic Rights for Refugees](#)
2. [Human Rights Watch Report](#)
3. [Amnesty International Report](#)
4. [Guidelines on the reception of asylum seekers for National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, 2000](#)
5. [Praesidium Project Recommendations and good practices in the management of mixed migratory flows by sea](#)

6. [ACAPS Briefing Note -Greece: Asylum Seekers and Migrants \(7th July\)](#)
7. <http://www.msf.org/article/greece-thousands-migrants-blocked-borders>
8. [A short overview of the Asylum procedure in Greece](#)
9. [Save the Children's child protection strategy 2013-2015](#)

#### **UNHCR Press Releases:**

1. <http://www.unhcr.org/559fe2ef6.html>
2. <http://www.unhcr.org/559fa5da6.html>
3. [UNHCR: "Greece faces 'unprecedented' emergency as migrant, refugee arrivals grow"](#)

## 8. Endnotes

1. Formally these serve as reception centres, but are so under-resourced and lacking in the normal services provided in a standard First Reception Centre for migrants/refugees, that they resemble more closely detention centres. Throughout this report these facilities are consequently called reception/detention centres.
2. A clinic (typically one independent of a hospital) where both general and specialist examinations and treatments are available to outpatients.
3. Of a total of 29,770 refugees arriving in Greece in June 2015, the majority were Syrian (60.43%), followed by Afghani (20.73%). Pakistani (6.76%) and Iraqi (5.64%), whilst around 7,000 were women and children.
4. A migrant is a person who moves from one country to another to live and usually to work, either temporarily or permanently, or to be reunited with family members. Regular migrants are foreign nationals who, under domestic law, are entitled to stay in the country.
5. The 1951 Refugee Convention spells out that a refugee is someone who "owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country ; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it." Under international law, being a refugee is a fact-based status, and arises before the official, legal grant of asylum." (Amnesty International)
6. By opting to highlight the fact that most of the people migrating to Greece are refugees, this report in no way hopes to feed into a debate on "who deserves more protection". It is SC's fundamental belief that both refugees and economic migrants deserve fair treatment, and not only can refugees not be subject to refoulement, but irregular migrants are also protected from expulsion through article 3 of ECHR.
7. This enables them to remain in Greece and seek asylum if they wish to, but is not in itself a permit allowing legal passage to other EU countries.
8. This requires non-Syrians to leave the country within a month. Any onwards travel to other EU countries would be illegal, as would remaining in Greece beyond the 1-month period.



[www.savethechildren.net](http://www.savethechildren.net)