

About UNHCR in Greece

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency was established in 1950 by the United Nations General Assembly . UNHCR leads and coordinates activities to protect and support refugees worldwide. However, the primary responsibility to protect refugees is always with the Government of the country where the refugees live.

What is the role of UNHCR in Greece?

Greece is a party to the 1951 UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the Government has the responsibility to process asylum claims and to decide whether somebody can be granted refugee status in Greece.

In Greece, therefore, UNHCR **does not register** refugees, UNHCR **does not examine** asylum applications and UNHCR **does not issue** refugee documents. The government is responsible for that.

UNHCR's role in Greece focuses on working with the Government, non-governmental and other organizations, volunteer networks and communities to ensure the protection of refugees and asylum seekers arriving in Greece.

UNHCR advocates for the improvement of policies and services that affect the lives of refugees. UNHCR supports the Government to improve the process through which people can apply for asylum and access rights. UNHCR does this either directly or by working with partners. UNHCR's role varies from location to location, depending on the identified needs and partnerships.

UNHCR assists asylum-seekers by connecting them with partners who can provide social and legal advice and representation.

UNHCR also provides support to government officials, the staff of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and others to enhance their capacity to understand and respond to the needs of refugees.

What is UNHCR HELP Website?

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, created the website help.unhcr.org/greece for refugees and asylum seekers in Greece.

On this website you will be able to find information about how to apply for asylum, cash assistance, family reunification, access to employment and other elements that are important for you as well.

The website is updated on a regular basis. Also check our new section '[Latest Announcements](#)' for all the recent news, events and opportunities that are relevant for refugees and asylum seekers in Greece.

We hope you visit us more often.

What can UNHCR do for you?

UNHCR staff will listen to you and inform you of the options and procedures that are available to you to allow you to make informed decisions for yourself. **Everything you say will be confidential.**

UNHCR will also refer you to relevant NGOs or an authority that might be able to provide you with the services or support necessary. UNHCR will only share your information if you agree.

- UNHCR staff can give you clear and practical legal information. We can inform you about the procedures that you must complete when you arrive in Greece. We can provide you with

information on how to apply for asylum, family reunification in another European country, relocation to another European country, or assisted voluntary to return to your home country. We can also inform you of your rights and obligations as an asylum seeker or beneficiary of international protection in Greece.

- UNHCR staff will explain to you specific procedures that may apply to the following groups: a) unaccompanied children b) persons with a disability or persons suffering from an incurable or serious illness, c) elderly, d) pregnant women or women having recently given birth, e) single parents with minor children, f) survivors of torture, rape or other serious forms of psychological, physical or sexual violence or exploitation, or persons with a post-traumatic disorder, in particularly survivors and relatives of victims of ship-wrecks, g) victims of trafficking. **Only if you agree**, will UNHCR staff share this information with the authorities or other organizations.
- If you are at risk because of your gender, age or sexual orientation, UNHCR can advise you on where to seek help. We can refer you to the relevant organization or authority for further support and protection, but will only do so if you agree.

UNHCR's responsibilities are limited to the following:

- The primary responsibility to protect and assist refugees in Greece is with the Greek Government. UNHCR works to support the Greek authorities in achieving that objective. The role of UNHCR in Greece does not include receiving and/or processing of asylum or resettlement applications. UNHCR staff will inform you of how you can apply for asylum with the Greek authorities.
- UNHCR in Greece **cannot return you** to your country of origin or another country. But we will inform you of the options available and how you can ask for assisted voluntary return.
- UNHCR can only facilitate shelter and assistance to vulnerable individuals and families within the overall system provided by the Greek authorities and other organizations.

Where can you find UNHCR?

- UNHCR teams are based in Athens, Lesbos, Chios, Samos, Kos, Thessaloniki, covering through physical presence, field missions and ad hoc visits all sites in their area of responsibility.
- UNHCR's Representation office is located in Athens. This office does not receive persons seeking information or assistance. Any urgent question can be addressed to UNHCR Greece via [email](#).

UNHCR partners in Greece

Check all of our partners through UNHCR Greece official page [here](#) (English and Greek).

UNHCR Greece Web Platforms

For more information about UNHCR Greece information products and webpages, kindly refer to the UNHCR Greece information portal [here](#), UNHCR Greece webpage [here](#) or access UNHCR Greece's Facebook link [here](#).

You can find information about the ESTIA accommodation scheme [here](#).