



# THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

## FACTSHEET

September 2017

### HIGHLIGHTS

**2002**

Year the Government of the Republic of Cyprus took over refugee protection responsibilities from UNHCR following the adoption of national refugee law in 2000 in preparation for accession to the European Union.

**59,099**

Asylum applications received in the government-controlled part of the country from 2002 to September 2017. Of these, **8,968** granted protection; **44,845** refused or otherwise closed; **4,594** pending a decision.

**76**

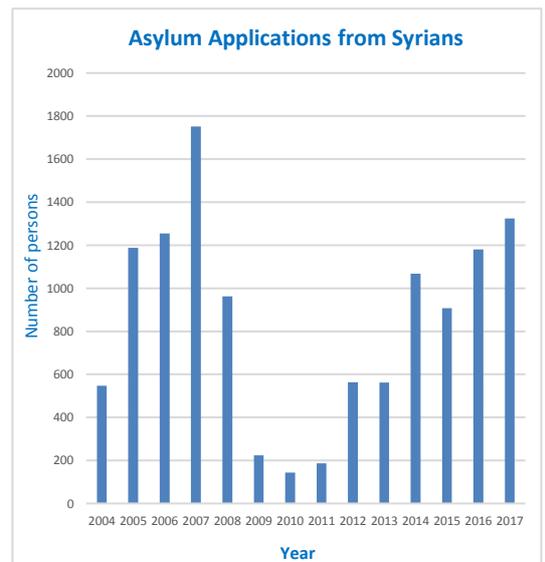
Refugees under UNHCR mandate currently residing in the northern part of Cyprus. They are mostly Syrians and Palestinians.

**53**

Refugees and asylum-seekers at the British Sovereign Base Areas (SBAs) who arrived in **1998** and have since been living there in a legal limbo.

### Population of concern (as at Sept. 2017)

- **1,250** refugees
- **7,718** granted subsidiary or humanitarian protection
- **4,594** asylum-seekers
- **221** unaccompanied/separated children applied for asylum in 2016, and another **109** in 2017
- **Top ten nationalities** of asylum-seekers in 2017: Syria, India, Vietnam, Bangladesh, Egypt, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Somalia, Cameroon, Philippines
- Asylum applications in 2016 increased by **36%** compared to 2015, and this upward trend has continued in 2017.
- Of the total numbers of applications received and processed between 2002 and September 2017, only **15%** were accorded protection – the vast majority subsidiary protection. In 2016-2017, the protection rate for Syrians was almost 100%, but only **3%** received refugee status compared to the EU average of 60%.



Printing date: 01 Oct 2015 Sources: UNCS, UNHCR  
The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

### UNHCR presence

UNHCR has established presence in the country since 1974.

#### Staff:

- 1 international
- 7 nationals
- 2 affiliated staff

## WORKING WITH PARTNERS

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**The Government of Cyprus** is UNHCR's key partner in its mission to ensure the protection of refugees and asylum-seekers in accordance with international and European Union standards. Over the years, UNHCR has strengthened its partnership with various Government ministries, especially those of the interior, foreign affairs, justice, education and labour and social affairs. UNHCR has also established constructive working relations and mutual co-operation with the relevant Parliamentary committees, the Ombudsman, the Office of the Child Commissioner, diplomatic missions, the media, etc.

**NGOs and civil society:** UNHCR has forged useful links with a number of local NGOs and other members of the civil society. At present, UNHCR has a funding-based partnership agreement with two NGOs:

- **Cyprus Refugee Council**, which provides free legal and social advice to asylum-seekers and refugees in the Republic of Cyprus (Tel.: +357 22 205 959 - Fax: +357 22 205 960; [info@cyrefugeecouncil.org](mailto:info@cyrefugeecouncil.org); Website: [www.cyrefugeecouncil.org](http://www.cyrefugeecouncil.org))
- **SOS Children's Village**, a Turkish Cypriot NGO helping UNHCR address the protection needs of asylum-seekers arriving in the northern part of the island (tel.: +90 392 225 5119 - Fax: +90 392 225 3345; [info@soscocukkoyu.org](mailto:info@soscocukkoyu.org); Website: [www.soscocukkoyu.org](http://www.soscocukkoyu.org))

## MAIN ACTIVITIES

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UNHCR's fundamental business in Cyprus is to assist the Government to further refine and improve its asylum legislation and the procedures and capacities for a refugee protection system fully in line with international standards. This would require that existing gaps and weaknesses in the national asylum legislation and practice are addressed, migration management policies incorporate protection safeguards, the refugee status determination procedures are further reformed to make them both fair and efficient, and programmes are put in place to help refugees find a durable solution by way of local integration. To achieve these objectives, UNHCR undertakes a number of activities:

- Monitoring and promoting respect for refugee rights and the standards of treatment of asylum-seekers, particularly as regards access to asylum procedures, reception conditions and detention.
- Influencing legislation affecting refugees and asylum-seekers by providing expert advice and comments on relevant draft laws to ensure compliance with international and EU standards.
- Providing technical assistance, legal advice and other forms of support to assist the authorities to further strengthen their refugee status determination procedures and ensure quality decision-making.
- Monitoring and advocacy to ensure that unaccompanied and separated children have effective access to the national child protection system with respect to accurate and timely identification, registration and documentation; guardianship and legal representation; adequate care and supervision; tracing and family reunification. Central to these actions is a best interest determination.
- Training of key stakeholders from the government and civil society on basic protection issues, including refugee rights, reception conditions for asylum-seekers, durable solutions, child protection, etc.
- Promoting good practices in relation to policies and measures that support the effective integration of refugees into the social, economic and cultural fabric of Cypriot society, including advocacy for naturalization, long-term residence permit and family reunification.
- Promoting accession to the UN statelessness conventions.
- Strengthening and broadening public information, awareness-raising and sensitization activities through media work, school activities, special campaigns, seminars and constituency-building.
- Strengthening partnerships with NGOs and other civil society actors involved in refugee protection.

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