



Belgrade Centre
for Human Rights

Asylum in the Republic of Serbia Report for May 2014

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STATISTICS¹

From 1st to 31st May 2014, the total of 761 foreign citizens expressed the intention to seek asylum, which is significantly more than 370 persons registered for the same period in 2013.

The majority of asylum seekers, 324 of them, come from Syria, while significantly fewer come from other countries; 117 persons from Somalia expressed the intention to seek asylum, 70 from Afghanistan, 50 from Eritrea, 37 from Pakistan, 18 from Sudan, 14 from Ghana, 13 from the Democratic Republic of Congo and 118 more asylum seekers from other countries. The majority of asylum seekers were men, 682 of them, and there were 79 women.

During the same period, 86 juvenile persons expressed the intention to seek asylum, 74 boys and 12 girls. Out of this number, 53 minors without escort expressed the intention to seek asylum in the Republic of Serbia, all of whom were male. The structure of minors according to their nationality is as follows: Afghanistan 23, Syria 13, and Somalia 10, two from Mali and Nigeria each and three from Pakistan.

In May 2014, 35 asylum seekers were registered, 12 asylum requests were submitted and one person was heard. In the same period, the Department of Asylum² brought 16 conclusions on the suspension of procedures, two decisions for two persons whereby they were assigned subsidiary protection and one decision granting asylum.

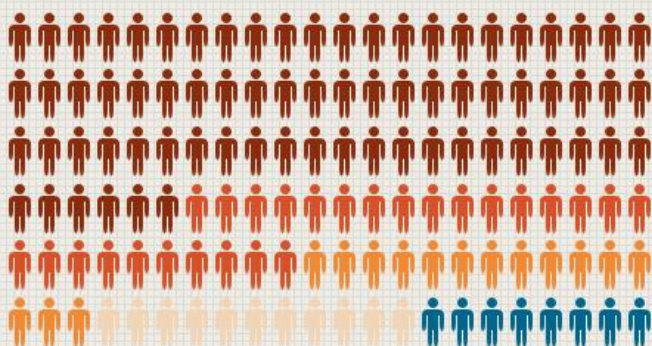
¹ All statistical reports were based on the data obtained from the UNHCR

²Terms Department of Asylum and Asylum Office are used in the Report to denote the first instance organ. The Asylum Act (hereafter AA) prescribes the establishment of an Asylum Office as the first instance organ. However, this body was never formed, hence the duties of the Office were performed by the Department of Asylum, the organisational unit of the Border Police Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (hereafter MIA)..

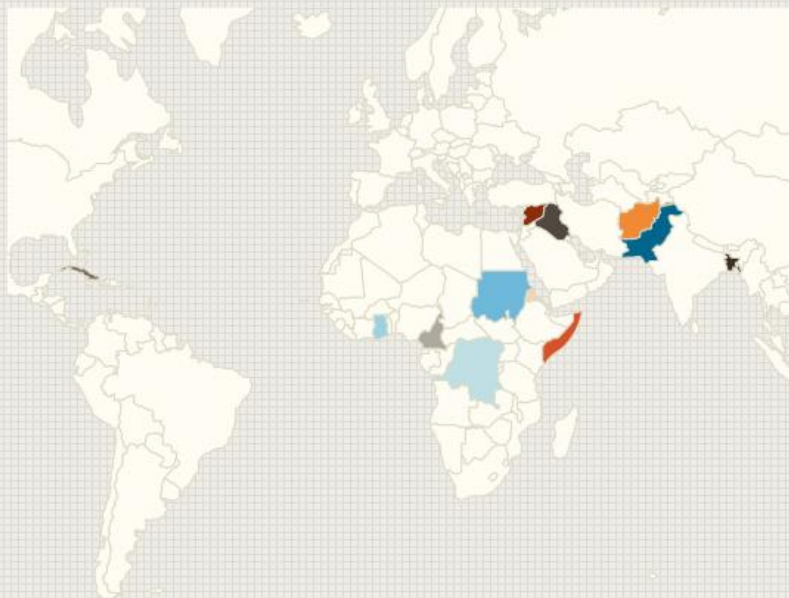
ASYLUM REQUESTS IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA



761 REQUESTS
1/5/2014 - 31/5/2014



Syria Somalia Afghanistan Eritrea Pakistan

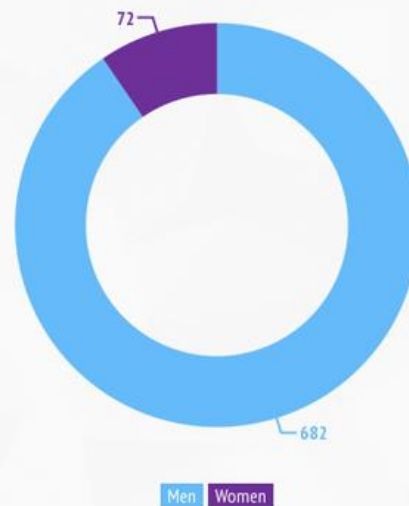


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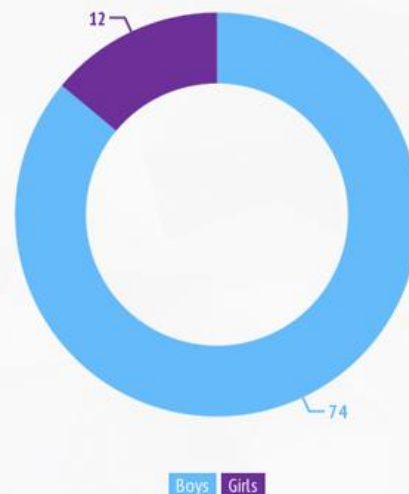
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GENDER STRUCTURE OF ASYLUM SEEKERS

1.5.2014. - 31.5.2014.



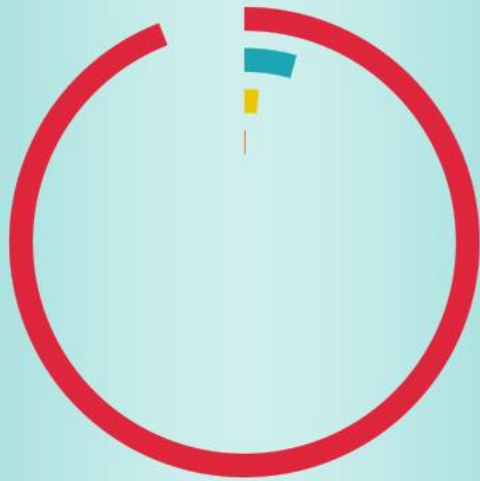
GENDER STRUCTURE OF MINOR ASYLUM SEEKERS



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STATISTICS FOR THE PERIOD 1/5 - 31/5/2014



Expressed intentions: 761 Registered: 35 Submitted: 12 Interview: 1

761

foreign citizens expressed intention to seek asylum in the Republic of Serbia

35

registered asylum seekers

12

submitted asylum applications

1

interview

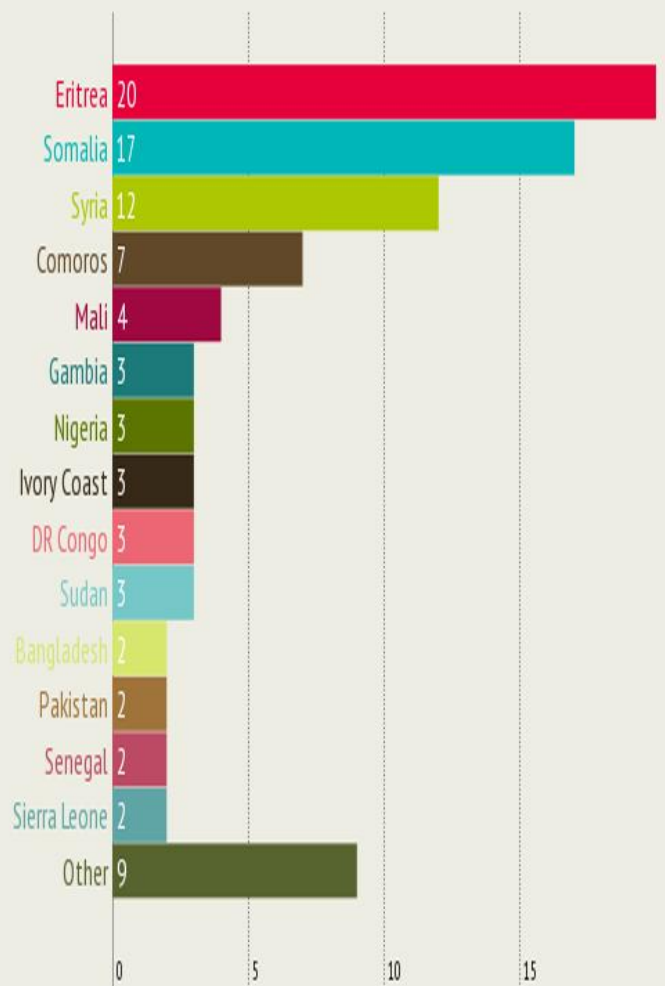
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NEW ID CARDS



92 new identification cards were issued to persons seeking asylum



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TEMPORARY ASYLUM CENTRE IN TUTIN³

On 26 May 2014, The Belgrade Centre for Human Rights team visited the Asylum Centre in Tutin. Due to the floods in the town of Obrenovac,⁴ 81 asylum seekers who previously resided in the *Sava Tent* hotel in Obrenovac, were transferred to the temporary Asylum Centre in Tutin. Furthermore, 54 asylum seekers from the Asylum Centre in Bogovadja were transferred to this centre as well. The staff in the temporary Asylum Centre in Tutin are employed in the local self-government and the Red Cross, and they invest a great effort to provide appropriate accommodation for the asylum seekers, and in the period when the asylum seekers from Obrenovac were moved to Tutin, the staff worked even longer than 15 working hours per day. As a result of the occupancy of the accommodation capacities in the Centre in Tutin, the dining room was modified into a dorm room, while the asylum seekers, get their meals outside, in the Centre's garden. Six to 40 people are accommodated in nine bedrooms. Many asylum seekers complained of poor hygienic conditions.

According to the Centre employees, the Police Department in Novi Pazar regularly issues certificates on the expressed intention to seek asylum to asylum seekers. Since its opening, the Asylum Department conducted the registration of asylum seekers only once and not a single asylum seeker in this Centre had the possibility to submit an asylum request, whereby they were de facto prevented from accessing the procedure. Not a single official of the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration of the Republic of Serbia or the Asylum Department is permanently present at this temporary Centre.

TEMPORARY ASYLUM CENTRE IN SJENICA

On the day when the Belgrade Centre for Human Rights visited the Asylum Centre in Sjenica (27 May 2014) 134 asylum seekers were accommodated in this Centre. Male asylum seekers are accommodated in the hall of the *Berlin* Hotel, which used to be used for wedding receptions,⁵ while women and children are accommodated in special apartments in excellent condition, used by hotel guests.²⁹ 29 asylum seekers who were evacuated due to the floods in Obrenovac are accommodated in this centre, as well as 54 persons transferred to Sjenica from the Asylum Centre in Bogovadja.

The Police Department in Sjenica issues certificates on the expressed intention to asylum seekers, but the Asylum Department has not performed a single official operation at this Asylum Centre since its opening, so all asylum seekers accommodated there are precluded access to asylum procedure.

“NIKOLA TESLA” AIRPORT

Authorised by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, since May 2014, the Belgrade Centre for Human Rights lawyers who provide legal aid to asylum seekers have been granted access to the transit zone of *Nikola Tesla* Airport, and the facilities where foreigners who do not meet the conditions for entering Serbia reside.⁶ Foreigners who had been denied access to Serbian territory, are accommodated in a room that belongs to the Belgrade Airport, and is secured by the Airport Security. Adult male foreign citizens, who sometimes reside at the airport for a couple of days, are accommodated in a room where windows cannot be opened, size of approximately 60m². There are no beds in this

³ All information in this report have been gathered during the in-site visits of the Belgrade Centre for Human Rights to the Asylum centres in Sjenica and Tutin as well as the Nikola Tesla Airport, and present a personal impression of lawyers providing legal aid to asylum seekers.

⁴ See e.g. <http://www.poplave.rs>

⁵ See *Report for the period January-April 2014*, Belgrade Centre for Human Rights, pp. 9-10, available at: http://www.azil.rs/doc/SRB_april_2014_1.pdf.

⁶ See *Report for the period January-April 2014*, Belgrade Centre for Human Rights, p. 6, available at: http://azil.rs/doc/Pravo_na_utociste_u_Republici_Srbiji_2013.pdf.

room. It has only about twenty old armchairs and covers. Foreigners are not allowed to leave this room and step out to fresh air. One toilet is located next to the room. The entire space is quite stuffy and inadequate for a longer stay.

The conditions in rooms where foreign persons are accommodated must meet the standards of humanity. According to the CPT standards, *“All police cells must be of reasonable dimensions with regard to the number of persons who are usually accommodated there and they must have enough light (i.e. enough reading light, except at time for sleeping) and enough air; if possible, they should have natural light. Moreover, the cells should be equipped so that rest is possible (e.g. fixed chairs or benches) and persons who are staying in custody over night should be provided with clean mattresses and blankets.”*⁷

According to information currently available to the Belgrade Centre for Human Rights, women and children who do not meet the necessary criteria for entering the Republic of Serbia, had been accommodated in a playroom, size of approximately 30m² with a toilet in decent condition. In this room there are two sofas and toys for children.

During their stay at the Belgrade Airport, all of these persons are provided with three meals per day.

⁷ Extract from 2nd General report *CPT/Inf (92) 3+, paragraph 42.