

## The human rights to water and sanitation of forcibly displaced persons in need of humanitarian assistance

1. Has your country been affected by forced displacement? If so, how? Please provide figures, the underlying reasons for forced displacement, the nationalities of those forcibly displaced and the approximate length of displacement. Please explain how your Government's national strategy and/or reception policy on water and sanitation take account of the needs of forcibly displaced persons.

Republic of Macedonia has been affected by transit of almost 1 million refugees/migrants mainly from Asia and Africa, in their way to EU. Health care free of charge has been provided to all refugees/migrants that had a need for it, nevertheless primary, secondary or tertiary health care.

2. Which preventive steps has your Government taken to ensure preparedness, resilience and adaptability of the existing water and sanitation services to the impact of future emergencies, including contingency plans and special budget?

Government of the Republic of Macedonia has an Action Plan on preparedness and response in crises/emergency situations.

Ministry of Health has its own Preparedness and response plan of the health system in emergencies, crises and catastrophes, and water and sanitation services are part of it.

3. What concrete measures has your Government taken to ensure that, during emergency situations, forcibly displaced persons have access to sufficient, safe, accessible, and acceptable water and sanitation services in a non-discriminatory way? How do these measures take into account the special needs of children (often separated and unaccompanied), pregnant women, girls, persons with disabilities, chronically ill persons, and older persons? How does your Government ensure that local and regional authorities provide emergency access to water and sanitation to forcibly displaced persons in line with international human rights law?

In Gevgelija near the border with Greece has been established the Migration/Refugee Transit Centre to provide shelter, access to safe drinking water and sanitation and separate toilets for men and women, as well free health care for migrants/refugees. The sanitary, hygienic and epidemiological condition is under constant monitoring by the Centre of Public Health-Veles that regularly gives suggestions and proposals regarding improvement of the condition.

The Migration/Refugee Transit Centre in the Tabanovce village near the border with Serbia has provided access to safe drinking water and sanitation and separate toilets for men and women. With an Action Plan for Handling Migrants, the sanitary, hygienic and epidemiological condition is under constant monitoring by the Centre of Public Health-Kumanovo that regularly gives suggestions and proposals regarding improvement of the condition.

4. Please identify and share examples of challenges your Government has faced in ensuring the human rights to water and sanitation by forcibly displaced persons during emergency situations.

Within the research, which was done by Human Rights Reporters in cooperation with the Institute of Public Health of the Republic of Macedonia, and through self-evaluation for equitable access to water and sanitation, the Centers for the Homeless in Skopje and the Kumanovo Center for Visitors were targeted, the results showed that there is a lack of access to drinking water and sanitation for the homeless, while in the

Transit Center - Tabanovce (belonging to the municipality of Kumanovo) access was provided for water and sanitation. The problem faced by refugees on their way along the route through Macedonia is that there is no access to water and sanitation along the highway.

From the other side, the NGO's who worked with refugees work also on providing Water, Sanitation and Hygiene, for refugees... and often deprived of proper access to water, sanitation and hygiene facilities. Most of the programs were based on responding to the needs of population in transit and in reception and detention facilities.

The WASH program includes installation and maintenance of water and sanitation facilities, distribution of hygiene items as well as hygiene promotion activities in the Temporary (transit) Centers for refugees in Macedonia, TC Tabanovce and TC Vinograd, Gevgelija. During the second half of 2015, when the transit of refugees in Macedonia was organized in two transit points, entrance point in Gevgelija and exit point in Tabanovce, was contributing to the infrastructure in order to provide temporary stay and transit with dignity to thousands of refugees transiting daily.

In cooperation with Solidarites International, the NGO's installed sanitation facilities on the entrance of the transit center, where refugees and migrants line-up and waited of hours to be admitted and processed. The installation of 2male, 2female and 1 toilet for persons with disability and barrel of water for washing was complimented with regular distribution of sanitizing gels for personal use, contributed to enhanced protection, dignity and quality of life of the refugees and migrants entering the country. In 2016, in partnership with Solidarites Internation, were finished the renovation of the WASH facilities in the detention center for foreigners "Gazi Baba" in Skopje, ensuring proper, gender sensitive access to water and sanitation facilities to the detained refugees and migrants in Macedonia.

5. In situations of forced displacement across borders, what are the water and sanitation service standards that your Government applies to refugees, asylum seekers and migrants in a vulnerable situation while *en route*, at borders and at reception? If they are subject to different treatment from the citizens or between themselves, please provide details of the national legal and policy frameworks that sustain your Government's position.

Standards for drinking water and sanitation services are the same as they are for Macedonia citizens and they are harmonized with EU legislation.

6. In situations of internal displacement, what are the water and sanitation service standards that your Government applies to internally displaced persons? If they are subject to different treatment from the host communities, please provide details of the national legal and policy frameworks that sustain your Government's position.

Standards for drinking water and sanitation services are the same for all, as well for internally displaced persons.

7. How has the arrival of forcibly displaced persons affected the current provision of water and sanitation services to local communities/host communities (as applicable)?

There were some preparatory work that had to be done, to build new facilities for water and sanitation services, and the costs have been covered by the Government.

8. In situations of protracted displacement in camps, host communities or urban settings, what concrete measures has your Government taken to ensure a transition from water and sanitation emergency assistance to a more sustainable and development-based approach to water and sanitation services? How have those forcibly displaced participated in the planning, design and management of more durable water and sanitation solutions?

Inadequate, untimely and bad judgment and wrong policy in the period from November 2014 to July 2015 contributed to occur 30 accidents despite the railways on Corridor 10. In the same period, hundreds of refugees and illegal migrants were detained in the reception center for foreigners Skopje municipality of Gazi Baba, where a few months spent in the most inhumane conditions. Because 300% overcrowding Center NGO's from home and abroad have accused the Republic of Macedonia for torturing these people. Shortly afterwards in the same center had forced housing of refugees prosecution and the police wanted to put in the role of witnesses in criminal proceedings against traffickers and perpetrators of acts of hatred. Thus, Macedonia became the only country in the world to detain witnesses and victims of crimes. And for this reckless and shortsighted move again our country was again accused of violating the right to life, the right to security and freedom of movement, rather than to provide protection and humane treatment and prevent discrimination.

Public participation of citizens in decision-making and proposing solutions regarding access to water and sanitation for forced populations is reduced to zero. This is for the simple reason that in Macedonia all are deaf to silent when it comes to the implementation of the Aarhus Convention ...

9. What are the main challenges that your Government faces when moving towards water and sanitation solutions that are more sustainable and adequate for situations of protracted displacement? How does your Government cooperate with international governmental organizations and NGOs in this respect?

There is continuous cooperation between the Government and non-governmental organizations international and local in order to provide all necessary conditions for everyday functioning of these Migration/Refugee Transit Centres.

Besides the WASH program for refugees, the NGO's organize various activities and interventions as part of the HP Campaign, mainly targeting the children living in the camp, but also the adult population. The educational and awareness raising activities are complemented by enhancing the access to facilities and high quality hygiene items. Inclusion of the target population in planning, creation and implementation of the activities and program is our core guiding principle and our asset for successful campaign and positive results.

10. In the context of rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts after disasters and conflicts (as applicable), how does your Government plan for and implement sustainable solutions for the human rights to water and sanitation that enable the return of forcibly displaced persons (as applicable)? What kind of cooperation does your Government establish with development actors to that effect?

According to art. 5 in Water Law in point 12 are stipulated Principle of universality of water management services - the universality of water resources management services is provided through non-discrimination; sustainability of the service, quality and efficiency; transparency; economically acceptable price and full coverage of the service area.