

LIVING CONDITIONS



Across Europe, refugees and displaced people are often denied access to basic shelter and adequate sanitation facilities. Many are living in sub-par, unsanitary conditions in overcrowded reception centres at the 'hot-spots' in Greece and Italy, or in complete destitution at transit-points such as Calais, Ventimiglia, and the streets of major cities such as Paris.

CHIOS, GREECE

Research conducted in January 2018:

- Large numbers of displaced people in Chios were residing in small and fragile tents. Alarming, camps were overcrowded, forcing many to settle in the street or on the beach.
- Camps were falling short of adequate health standards: the Souda camp attracted rats and insects, due to its proximity to a drainage pipe extracting dirty water from the city. Hot water was only available for a few hours per day, while in some camps it was altogether unavailable, such as in Vial.
- Respondents also recounted to researchers that often, they could not access enough food each day, telling us that spoiled food was commonplace, leading to many cases of food poisoning.

PARIS, FRANCE

Research conducted in May 2017:

- Living conditions remain wholly inadequate with the large majority (85.5% of respondents) living on the streets of Paris, with little access to appropriate sanitation facilities, relying on food distribution points by local organisations and civil society.
- A number of the respondents reported having submitted an asylum application in France but were forced to remain on the streets as the few asylum accommodation centres in the area were full.
- 47.7% of respondents denied having access to enough food, and many newer arrivals often did not know where distribution points are located.

VENTIMIGLIA, ITALY

Research conducted in August 2017:

- Living conditions are characterised by an acute lack of clean drinking water or sanitation facilities. An alarming 82.1% of respondents did not have enough water to drink where 69.85% only had access to one meal a day.
- An estimated 200 to 300 individuals in the area were destitute, sleeping rough under bridges and by the riverbank.
- 82.4% of respondents usually slept by and washed in the river, whilst only 11.3% were housed in the Red Cross camp.

Policy recommendations:

European governments must ensure urgent provision of basic shelter to all refugees and displaced people arriving on their territory, regardless of immigration status, in line with international human rights provisions, in particular the UN Declaration of Human Rights, Article 25, which states that the realisation of the right to an adequate standard of living requires as a minimum the enjoyment of subsistence rights, that is adequate food and nutrition, clothing, housing and care when required.

In addition, governments must ensure that all individuals who have claimed asylum within their jurisdiction are provided with accommodation whilst their claims are being assessed, not just in emergency situations brought on by cold weather conditions, conforming with the 2003 Council Directive 2003/9/EC and the subsequent 2013/33/EU laying down minimum standards for the reception of asylum seekers.