



UMBRELLA REFUGEE COMMITTEE



Refugee-led Mobile Patrols

Report Q2 - 2026

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1. About the URC's Refugee-led Mobile Patrols

The Umbrella Refugee Committee's (URC) refugee-led mobile patrols project is funded in 2026 by UNHCR's Refugee-Led Innovation Fund. With this initiative, the URC connects asylum-seekers, refugees and other migrants experiencing homelessness in Brussels with essential service information, community support, and trusted human connection. Our volunteers combine lived experience of forced displacement, knowledge of complex asylum procedures, language skills, and community-to-community outreach to support those most isolated and excluded.

2. Overview

In Q2 we did more patrols than Q1, although we still did not operate at full speed/capacity. This was due to needing to recruit and train more volunteers, as well as individuals to lead the patrols. We started going on Wednesday mornings (10:00-13:00) around the Hub as it opens for lunch at 12:30 and so attracts a lot of people, and then Sunday evenings (17:00-19:00). We started collaborating with Médecins Sans Frontières, who provide medical support on Wednesdays, while we can provide sociolegal information and/or referral, other services referrals, and community support (i.e. complementary offerings).

A number of people encountered were in irregular stay or had recently arrived, with limited awareness of processes like the Fedasil waiting list, leading to several registrations and referrals. There were also a few cases involving housing needs, including individuals and families moving between or exiting shelters such as SamuSocial, with some follow-up support coordinated through services like Bruss'Help (also with thanks to our colleague Alphonse Munyaneza).

Indicator	Observation
Patrols conducted	7
# of people encountered Q1 (approx.)	105
Individual case forms/surveys completed	36
Main locations	Humanitarian Hub, Parc Maximilien, Tour & Taxis, Porte de Namur, WTC area
Main referral organisations	Frequent referrals to Vluchtelingenwerk Vlaanderen Legal Helpdesk and Infoline, MSF, Samusocial, Humanitarian Hub, Doucheflux, Refugee Medical Point, services and URC community organisations

3. Notes on Data Collection

Unfortunately, we cannot always collect data/surveys from *all* persons we encounter, speak to, and/or accompany. Hence, the numbers below are far lower than the actual number of people we reach and (try to) assist.

The data shown in this report is not the complete dataset for this period. To request the full Excel file / raw data, please contact us using the details provided at the end.

In Q3, we are placing a stronger focus on improving and expanding our data collection efforts. We are also going more regularly on our patrols outreach.

Two particular cases can be highlighted that are not included in this data set:

- A Kurdish family (2 parents) and a child (young boy), who were homeless. The boy was sick, and the parents very distressed. We managed to find them temporary accommodation in Marie Curie 2.
- A woman from Sierra Leone with 2 children. The woman was a subsequent applicant for international protection and so denied reception from Fedasil. She also had medical issues. She was homeless. One of our volunteers is accompanying her and trying to find a solution for her situation.

4. Quantitative & Qualitative Data

Gender

Gender	Count
Male	35
Female	1
Grand Total	36

Age

Age (years)	Count
19-26	8
27-40	20
40-64	7
65+	1
Grand total	36

Nationality

Nationality	Count
Sudan	5
Afghanistan	3
Morocco	3
Tunisia	3
Algeria	2
Azerbaijan	2
Guinea	2
Liberia	2
South Sudan	2
Albania	1
Congo (DRC)	1
Eritrea	1
Gambia	1

Georgia	1
Ghana	1
Mauritania	1
Mozambique	1
Pakistan	1
Russian, German	1
Turkey	1
Yemen	1
Grant Total	36

Time in Belgium

Time in Belgium	Count (approx.)
Less than 1 month	8
1-6 months	6
6-24 months	7
More than 2 years	10
Unknown/unclear	5
Grand total	36

Residence status

The majority of people encountered were in an active asylum procedure, while a significant proportion were in Dublin procedures or in situations of irregular stay following rejection or loss of status. A smaller number of cases involved complex administrative barriers (such as lack of postal address preventing access to asylum interviews), highlighting structural obstacles in the asylum process rather than individual legal uncertainty.

Residence Status	Count
Asylum seeker / ongoing procedure	20
Dublin procedure	4
Undocumented / irregular stay / rejected	4
Complex administrative cases	2
Unclear / non-legal answers	3
Other EU-related / migration history	2
Unknown / blank	1
Grant Total	36

Application status	Count (approx.)
Asylum procedure ongoing (waiting/interview stage)	7
Dublin procedure	4
Rejected / negative decisions	5

Appeal / reopened cases	1
Regularisation (9bis)	1
Complex multi-country cases	3
Administrative/document issues	1
Vulnerability / social disruption cases	2
Unclear / unknown	12
Grand total	36

Homelessness Situation

The majority of people encountered reported experiencing homelessness either continuously or for extended periods. Several individuals indicated long-term street exposure exceeding six months or even multiple years. A smaller group reported very recent exposure to homelessness, often beginning immediately upon arrival in Belgium. A minority were temporarily accommodated in emergency shelters such as Samusocial or regional facilities.

Housing situation	Count (approx.)
Long-term homelessness (6+ months)	6
Medium-term (1–6 months)	5
Recent homelessness (<1 month / arrival phase)	6
Continuous homelessness (“yes” category)	8
Temporary shelter / institutional housing	2
Unclear / missing	9
Grand Total	36

Have you ever stayed in a shelter or centre in Brussels?	Count
No	16
Yes	14
Unknown	6
Grand Total	36

Main Challenges Faced

Challenges Faced	Count
Shelter	27
Food	16
Legal/admin support	16
Healthcare / health issues	4
Access to internet/phone	3
Clothing / warmth	3
Isolation / loneliness	3
Hygiene facilities	2
Psychological support / trauma	2
Safety	2
Dentist	1
Unclear	1
Grand Total	80

Additional Observations

Several individuals showed signs of psychological distress, confusion, or anxiety. There was frequent legal uncertainty, including repeated asylum rejections, Dublin cases, and unclear procedures across multiple EU countries. Many people were unaware of available services such as the Fedasil waiting list or lacked clarity on their status. Key practical barriers included no access to phones or internet, inability to pay administrative fees, and lack of language support for legal advice.

5. Contact**Ella Petousis***Coordinator*ella@refugee-committee.org[\(+32\) 049 537 8076](tel:+322495378076)**Umbrella Refugee Committee**

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