

MIXED MOVEMENTS IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA: SITUATION UPDATE

November 2023

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MONTH

KEY FIGURES

2,491

irregular arrivals recorded during the reporting month

31,152

total arrivals in 2023

2,144

persons accommodated in official reception facilities (as of 3 December 2023)

8%

children in families

6%

unaccompanied children

1%

single adult females

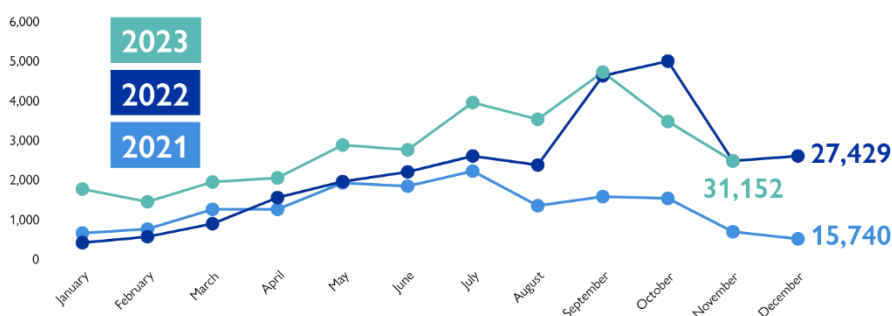
Main nationalities

44% Afghanistan

19% Morocco

6% Pakistan

In November 2023¹, authorities recorded 2,491 irregular arrivals in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), a decrease by 29 per cent compared to the previous month (3,487). The majority of new arrivals declared to originate from Afghanistan (33%), Morocco (24%) and the Syrian Arab Republic (13%). Among them, 88 per cent (2,186) were issued an “Attestation on Intention to Seek Asylum” (AISA). So far in 2023, BiH authorities have registered 31,152 irregular arrivals in BiH, which is 25 per cent more compared to the same period in 2022. It is the highest number of irregular arrivals ever recorded in a year by the BiH authorities, exceeding the 2019 peak.



As of the last day of the reporting period, 2,144 migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees are accommodated in Temporary Reception Centres (TRCs) and other private and NGO-led shelters in BiH. This represents an increase of 32 per cent compared to the last day of the previous reporting period. The map below depicts the distribution of beneficiaries in BiH as of 3 December 2023.



¹ Reporting period: from 6 November to 3 December 2023
Data is based on the statistics on arrivals and AISA shared on a weekly basis by the Ministry of Security (MoS)
All data provided in this report is based on information available to date

CONTEXT ANALYSIS AND INTERAGENCY COORDINATION

MIXED MOVEMENTS IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA THIS MONTH:

- In November, **3,127 new registrations were recorded in all TRCs, representing a 14 per cent decrease compared to the previous month (3,684)**. Consistent with October, fewer migrants were observed in active transit locations compared to warmer months.
- **For the first time since October 2019, the Syrian Arab Republic ranked among top three countries of origin** of monthly irregular arrivals with nearly 60 per cent of all Syrian registrations in 2023 having been recorded in September, October and November. Of the 321 persons who declared to be Syrian nationals, many are likely in need of international protection. According to focus group interviews conducted in TRCs, most Syrians who had recently arrived had been living in Türkiye for one or more years. Interviewees spoke of no longer feeling safe in Türkiye due to the increasingly hostile public discourse around migration. Interviewees felt that this was making migrants more vulnerable to labour exploitation, which, coupled with the general economic downturn, served as a strong push factor.
- In November 2023, **the Sector for Asylum of the Ministry of Security registered the asylum claims of 16 persons** (14 cases) and conducted five Refugee Status Determination interviews (five cases). During the month, two persons (one case) were granted refugee status, five persons (five cases) were granted subsidiary protection, and two applications were “otherwise closed” (two cases). As of 30 November, 111 asylum-seekers (76 cases) were awaiting processing and final decision in BiH.

INTERAGENCY COORDINATION:

- During **Interagency Coordination meetings**, the discussions focused on the establishment of the UN Network on Migration (co-led by IOM and ILO). The Network will start operating in 2024 and will be discussing issues related to migration and development. In parallel, the Mixed Migration Working Group will continue to coordinate the mixed migration response.
- In TRC Blažuj, **partner organizations worked together to improve the hygiene situation**, which often represents a challenge due to the high rate of arrivals and departures of beneficiaries. A series of awareness sessions were organized on maintaining personal and communal spaces, highlighting the benefits and emphasizing the risks of bacterial, viral, and fungal diseases due to poor hygiene. Staff from partner organizations were actively involved in promoting the importance of hygiene and participated in daily cleaning activities. The daily shelter and hygiene checks have shown encouraging results - the noticeably cleaner interior of accommodation units and communal areas.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AVAILABLE

- [IOM – Migrant Mobility Situation Report in Bosnia and Herzegovina - November 2023](#)
- [UNHCR - BiH monthly update – November 2023](#)
- [UNFPA Gender-based violence against women and girls on the move study](#)
- [UNICEF - Podrška i prijatelj kojem se djeca mogu povjeriti](#)
- [SCI – Outreach team activities](#)
- [DRC - Border Monitoring Factsheet](#)



The Mixed Migration Response in Bosnia and Herzegovina is organized jointly by international, national and local partners, in close coordination with relevant authorities.

IOM



Providing accommodation to new beneficiaries in TRC Blažuj @IOM 2023

1,288

Number of services provided by the IOM Mobile Team

3,172

Number of new registrations in TRCs (including pre-registrations)

2,968

Number of emergency vulnerability screenings in TRCs

539

Number of persons identified with protection risks and needs

116,161

Number of meals distributed

29,708

Number of non-food items distributed

In November, as a follow-up to his visit to Sarajevo in June 2023, IOM's Director of the Regional Office for South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Manfred Profazi, met with the Prime Minister of the Una Sana Canton, Mr Mustafa Ružnić. The discussions focused on the successful collaboration with BiH local authorities which has proven to be instrumental in effectively managing migration flows in the region. In addition, IOM's Regional Director visited the reception center Borići with the mayor of the city of Bihać, Mr Elvedin Sedić.

To mark World Children's Day, IOM organized creative and educational workshops for children in the family-oriented reception centres Ušivak and Borići. Through games and engaging content, the workshops provided children with information about their rights and familiarized themselves with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. From 1 January to 30 November, more than 5,900 children (875 girls, 5,098 boys) were assisted by IOM, including 4,025 unaccompanied and separated children.

In TRC Ušivak, IOM organized a community consultation with nine migrants from Syria, Kuwait, Iran, Turkey, Afghanistan, and Congo, as part of the participation mechanisms established in the centre, to ensure that the assistance and services align closely with the diverse needs of the migrant population currently in BiH. To address participants feedback and requests, the IOM team developed and advertised new information materials in TRCs on non-food items and water, sanitation and hygiene facilities.

In TRC Lipa, IOM and SFA teams finalized the new bilingual Standard Operating Procedures (SoPs) on Food, Non-Food Items, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene and Shelter services. The SoPs will ensure consistency of services by outlining step-by-step procedures and offer clear and detailed instructions for carrying out everyday tasks.



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UNHCR



Cooking workshop of Turkish cuisine with persons under international protection @UNHCR/BHWI 2023

UNHCR and its legal partner Vaša prava BiH organized 33 group information sessions on the asylum procedure and international protection in BiH, including joint sessions with IOM, in reception centres and other accommodation sites. Out of the total number of sessions, seven were specific for unaccompanied and separated children (UASC), attended by 37 minors from Afghanistan and Pakistan. In addition, legal counselling was carried out with 15 persons from Palestine accommodated in the Salakovac Refugee Reception Centre, who expressed interest in starting the asylum procedure in BiH. Nine others will be supported to record, confirm, or acquire BiH citizenship.

Individual and group social, recreational, and occupational activities are organized by UNHCR's partner the Bosnia and Herzegovina Women's Initiative (BHWI) aimed at preserving the mental health of forcibly displaced people and developing life skills. In November, 84 sessions were held in private accommodation, AC Delijaš and TRCs, such as sewing, cooking, music, art, and sports workshops.

49 asylum-seekers and persons under international protection are undertaking B/C/S language courses as part of their integration path. In response to increased interest, a new beginners' group started in November, in parallel to the ongoing third semester for more advanced students. Language learning is supported and monitored by BHWI through pedagogical mentoring interventions.

Together with the Ministry of Security, UNHCR organized three training courses for the Border Police, the Service for Foreigners' Affairs and Centres for Social Welfare in Livno/Bosansko Grahovo, Banja Luka/Bosanska Gradiska, and Bijeljina, benefitting a total of 70 participants. The training focused on principles of the international refugee law, BiH asylum procedure and roles of different bodies in the national asylum system.

273

persons provided with information related to asylum in BiH

107

persons assisted with free legal aid related to asylum in BiH

27

persons who are represented by UNHCR/Vaša prava BiH are waiting for the registration of their asylum claim

998

persons assisted with psychosocial support

84

social, recreational and occupational therapy sessions organized

UNICEF



Child Friendly Space activity in TRC Borići
@UNICEF 2023

In partnership with Fenix in TRC Borići and World Vision in TRC Ušivak **112 children (52 girls and 60 boys) and 139 parents out of which 17 pregnant women were reached with infant and young child feeding (IYCF) services.** In November, the mother-baby corner pediatric nurses held educational workshop focused on subjects such as breastfeeding and nutrition, personal hygiene, development of sensory-motor abilities and the development of attention and concentration and coordination of movements.

270 children (49 girls and 221 boys of which 141 UASC) were reached with non-formal education, including foreign and local language learning, support in learning and catch-up classes within reception centers and schools. Teachers have utilized the Akelius Digital Language course through a blended teaching method. 288 children (47 girls) in TRCs Borići and Ušivak attended the Akelius Digital Language course. 70 children (24 girls and 46 boys, of which 4 UASC) were supported with integration into the formal education system.

UNICEF/WV Child protection and legal guardian teams provided **support with registration, accommodation and access to services for 330 unaccompanied and separated children** in both TRCs ensuring 24/7 monitoring and support. The team also implemented 252 activities for children in TRCs including educational, creative and sport activities. 166 children were provided with mental health and psychosocial support in both TRCs.

UNICEF facilitated **monthly Child Protection Working Groups** at the Una-Sana and Sarajevo cantonal level as part of the child protection coordination. The CPWGs enabled the exchange of regular updates from the field between UN agencies, NGOs and addressed the needs and challenges identified such as violent pushbacks, the critical need to promote protection policies, update referral mechanisms at TRC level as needed.

Throughout the reporting period **184 children (60 girls) benefited from activities in the Child Friendly Spaces** in both TRCs. International Children's Day was marked with various workshops and activities in both TRCs to promote the rights and well-being of children worldwide.

- 581**
children on the move benefiting from 24/7 protection and care
- 143**
UASC benefitting from the appointment and support of a legal guardian
- 270**
Refugee and migrant children benefitting from structured non-formal education, language courses and vocational training
- 70**
Refugee and migrant children supported with integration into the formal education system
- 112**
Refugee and migrant children benefitting from Mother-baby corner activities

UNFPA



During November, **UNFPA delivered diverse services to GBV survivors, adequately and timely responding to their needs.** GBV case management activities were primarily focused on the safety, psychosocial and health components of the response to Gender-based violence with a culturally, age- appropriate, and gender sensitive approach. UNFPA aided GBV survivors who reported an increased number of lived experiences of intimate partner violence that happened in the country of origin or during movement. UNFPA held a refresher training on Managing GBV in emergencies for 27 humanitarian personnel in TRC Ušivak.

UNFPA in close cooperation with SFA/IOM supported 106 vulnerable young men with protection sensitive accommodation in the Green Zones in TRC Blazuj and TRC Lipa. UNFPA in cooperation with local health centers continued to support vulnerable populations with SRH services, also pregnant women were assisted through comprehensive SRH services with additional empowerment through the Young Mothers Club. Educational SRH sessions with male residents marked the month of men’s health through the No Shave November campaign, raising awareness on the importance of preserving male reproductive health.

Continuous MHPSS support was ensured for women in protracted stay within TRCs, constantly working on progress towards complete readiness for independent action in private and social life. PSS sessions with male GBV survivors provided much-needed support and empowerment helping develop skills to deal with negative emotions and cognitive thoughts that limit daily social functioning.

As part of the 16 days of activism against GBV on women campaign, UNFPA presented the GBV against women and girls on the move study conducted in the segment of humanitarian response to mixed migration in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The study results, knowledge and good practices were presented to participants including representatives of state authorities and institutions.

489

Number of comprehensive GBV/PSS services provided to migrants, refugees and asylum seekers

336

Number of SRH services provided to migrants, refugees and asylum seekers

683

Number of empowerment services provided to male migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in line with "Boys and young men on the Move" methodology

326

Number of empowerment services provided to female migrants, refugees and asylum seekers

229

Number of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers educated on GBV



DRC



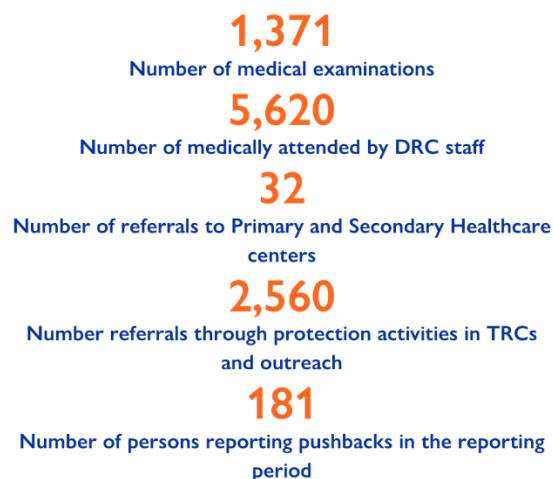
Provision of medical assistance to beneficiaries @DRC 2023

As colder weather set in, the medical units experienced increased pressure due to more beneficiaries reporting flu-like symptoms. Respiratory problems saw a mild rise across all TRCs. **DRC's medical staff responded by conducting information sessions on flu prevention and home medication** for flu symptoms. Despite a decrease in newcomers to TRCs during this reporting period, DRC's medical staff shifted their focus to **health prevention activities**. Initiatives included raising awareness about diabetes, conducting on-the-spot sugar measurements during standard medical checkups, and providing informational sessions on the proper use of diabetes therapy.

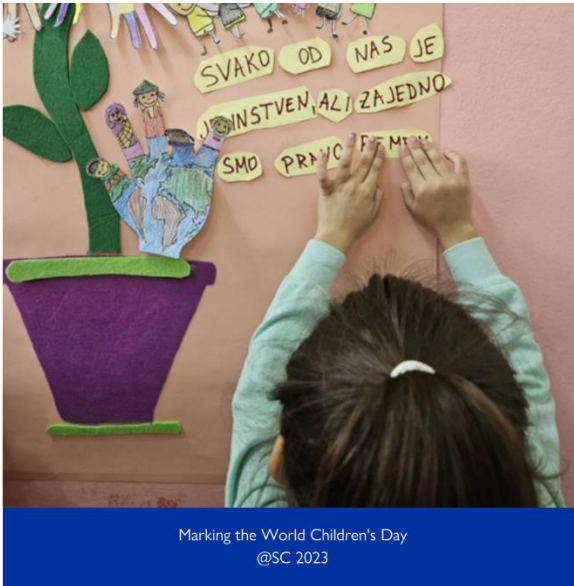
During the reporting period, the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) continued its efforts in **systematic examinations for school inclusion in Sarajevo Canton**, completing a total of 14 examinations. These beneficiaries are set to be integrated into Bosnia and Herzegovina's school system. Notably, there has been an increased incidence of Neuropsychiatric (NPS) cases in Temporary Reception Centers (TRCs), with self-harm emerging as a prevalent diagnosis among the migrant population. Collaborative efforts with Médecins du Monde (MdM) focused on **reviewing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for Harm Reduction (HR)s**, aiming to enhance the impact on beneficiaries. While the workload related to NPS cases showed a decrease later in the month, there remains ongoing pressure on DRC staff in medical units, particularly concerning cases of self-harm. To address this, DRC initiated a meeting with MdM, IOM, and SFA to strengthen Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) pathways, providing additional refreshers if needed.

DRC co-partner: Médecins du Monde (MDM)

Common topics that are processed in individual psychological sessions are depressive and anxious symptoms like sleeping issues, low mood, abuse of substances for their calming effects, ruminative thoughts about the past, lack of will, anhedonia, and low energy. Family issues are common problems in the country of origin, as is poverty. Irritability is still common and is usually the effect of tiredness and recreational drug use. The feeling of "being stuck" is often mentioned from the side of beneficiaries who are staying longer in TRCs.



Save the Children (SC)



Marking the World Children's Day
@SC 2023

115

potential unaccompanied and separated children benefited from the outreach child protection services

49

Referrals to services for children outside reception centers

105

Potential UASC successfully referred and escorted to accommodation in TRC Ušivak and TRC Borići

87

Children participated in the preparatory school program

707

Information-sharing instances to children and adults

Save the Children outreach teams remain critical child protection actors who ensure appropriate care and coordinated referrals along the route through BiH in alignment with government institutions, NGOs, and UN agencies.

In November, Save the Children's dedicated outreach teams in Tuzla, Sarajevo, and Una Sana Canton provided vital support to **115 unaccompanied children and 30 families with children outside reception centers**. Through collaboration with guardianship authorities and the Service for Foreigners' Affairs, we ensured 105 unaccompanied children, including one girl, received protection services while being out of reception centers, including access to information and services, legal guardianship and safe escort to Ušivak and Borići reception centers.

Save the Children observed a notable uptick in the transit of unaccompanied children from Syria. In Una-Sana Canton, a staggering 70% of the unaccompanied children encountered reported that they were already registered with the BiH's Service for Foreigners' Affairs prior to reaching Una-Sana Canton. A 15-year-old girl from Afghanistan was identified in front of the PPC Blažuj. She was traveling with other male minors and an adult. She was successfully placed in the PPC Ušivak, where detailed assessment was conducted by competent institutions.

World Children's Day on November 20th was celebrated with **seventeen children on the move** through educational-creative workshops, emphasizing their rights and safety.

In the preparatory school program in Una-Sana Canton, 87 children (50 boys and 37 girls) participated, with 30 continuing and 57 new enrollees (32 boys and 25 girls), including six unaccompanied and separated boys. Predominantly, these children hailed from Afghanistan, with others from Türkiye, Syria, Mongolia, and Iran. SCI commitment was further evidenced by 92 organized workshops, 50 focusing on education and creativity, and 42 on sports, ensuring a balanced approach to the wellbeing of the children.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MONTH IN PICTURES



Community participation meeting organized in TRC Ušivak @IOM 2023



Legal counselling session in the Salakovac Refugee Reception Centre with a group of persons from Palestine @UNHCR/Vaša prava BiH 2023



Vocational training in TRC Borići @UNICEF 2023



Presentation of the GBV against women on the move study @UNFPA 2023



Group psychological and mental health sessions @MdM 2023 (DRC partner)



Supporting UASC during registration at SFA and appointing guardianship in Tuzla Canton @SCI 2023



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