

MIXED MOVEMENTS IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA: SITUATION UPDATE

March 2024

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MONTH

KEY FIGURES

1,993

irregular arrivals recorded during the reporting month

6,544

total arrivals in 2024

2,136

persons accommodated in official reception facilities (as of 31 March 2024)

6%

children in families

8%

unaccompanied children

3%

single adult females

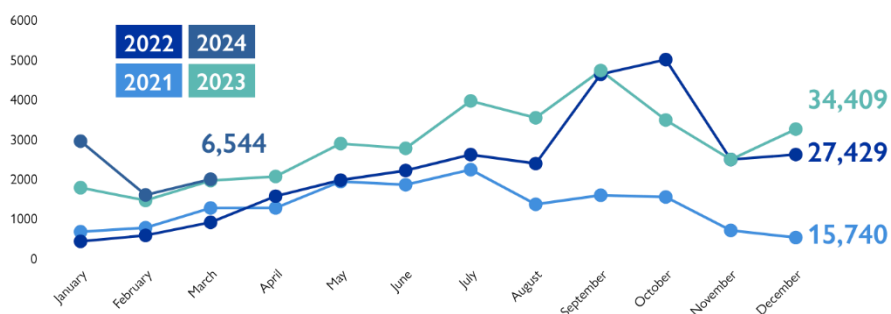
Main nationalities

44% Syrian Arab Republic

13% Afghanistan

9% Türkiye

In March 2024¹, authorities recorded 1,993 irregular arrivals in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), which is 25 per cent more compared to the preceding month (1,598 persons). The majority of new arrivals declared to originate from the Syrian Arab Republic (44%), Afghanistan (13%), and Türkiye (9%). 84% of them (1,675 persons) were issued an “Attestation on Intention to Seek Asylum” (AISA). Until 31 March, BiH authorities have registered 6,544 irregular arrivals in BiH, which is 26% more compared to the same period in 2023.



As of the last day of the reporting period, 2,136 migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees are accommodated in Temporary Reception Centres (TRCs) and other private and NGO-led shelters in BiH. The map below depicts the distribution of beneficiaries in BiH as of 31 March 2024.



¹ Reporting period: from 4 to 31 March 2024

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:

- According to interviews conducted with 829 migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees, at known entry routes, transit locations and exit locations in BiH as well as in four TRCs, **the average age of interviewees was 29**, with the youngest being 18 years old and the oldest 60. **Most (82%) of the respondents were single**. Men represented 86 per cent of the respondents, while women made up the remaining 14 per cent.
- **The interviewees had an average length of stay in BiH of 30 days, five days longer than in February 2024**. This could potentially be a direct result of increased border patrols and returns from Croatia.
- **In March 2024, the Sector for Asylum of the Ministry of Security registered the asylum claims of 11 persons (11 cases)** and conducted eight Refugee Status Determination interviews (eight cases). During the month, 10 persons (seven cases) were granted subsidiary protection. One application was otherwise closed/suspended. As of 31 March, 157 asylum-seekers (110 cases) were awaiting processing and final decision in BiH.
- **An increase in asylum claim registrations was recorded in the first quarter of 2024**. A total of 75 persons had their claims registered by the authorities, which is an increase of 80% compared with the same period last year. There are currently 157 asylum-seekers with their claims pending processing and final decision. The increase in the number of claims to process is a challenge to BiH authorities, which have invested great efforts to keep the registration of asylum applications at a steady pace. Scheduling interviews and taking decisions are crucial next steps in the procedure. UNHCR considers that for manifestly well-founded claims, the authorities should implement accelerated or simplified procedures to reduce the overall length of the procedure and the workload of the Sector for Asylum personnel.

INTERAGENCY COORDINATION:

- **During the reporting period, the coordination between partner organizations led to the organization of inclusive celebrations** for events such as International Women's Day and Nowruz, the Persian New Year and Easter. These events have included consultations with beneficiaries, ensuring that festivities were culturally authentic and inclusive.
- In March, **the Complaint, Feedback, and Suggestion meetings were re-established in TRC Blažuj**. All partner organizations nominated one or two members for the commission that would attend the meetings on a bi-weekly basis. The main objectives are to increase the influence of beneficiaries to improve services, ensure that incidences of dissatisfaction with the assistance provided are addressed, and support accountability mechanisms for staff behaviour and misconduct.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AVAILABLE

- [IOM – Migrant Mobility Situation Report in Bosnia and Herzegovina - March 2024](#)
- [UNHCR - BiH monthly update – March 2024](#)
- [UNFPA Gender-based violence against women and girls on the move study](#)
- [UNICEF - Podrška i prijatelj kojem se djeca mogu povjeriti](#)
- [SCI – Marking social health day](#)
- [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



Mine risk education session in TRC Blažuj @IOM 2024

1,040

Number of services provided by the IOM Mobile Team

2,367

Number of new assisted beneficiaries in TRCs

1,674

Number of emergency vulnerability screenings in TRCs

396

Number of persons identified with protection risks and needs

111,838

Number of meals distributed

25,332

Number of non-food items distributed

From 12 - 14 March, IOM organized a **three-day training on Cultural Competencies, Mediation and Vulnerability of Migrants** for 20 representatives of the Service of Foreigner's Affairs (SFA). The sessions focus included beneficiaries' profiles and vulnerabilities, the prevention of gender-based violence, assisted voluntary return and reintegration (AVRR) programming and the role of cultural mediators in facilitating dialogues with migrants. This training is part of a series of activities organized to build the capacity of SFA staff working directly with beneficiaries in temporary reception centres (TRCs), and integral to the ongoing transition to a State-led migration response.

Many activities took place in TRCs to mark International Women's Day on 8 March. In TRC Ušivak, a Dance and Theatre workshop was offered to migrant, asylum seekers and refugees women by the NGO SCENA. In TRC Lipa, representatives of the Technical Faculty Bihać, beneficiaries, and IOM staff prepared Boxes of Friendship filled with products made in the Creative Zone, and distributed boxes to members of the Cancer Support Associations in Bihać, Cazin, Velika Kladuša and Bosanski Petrovac.

On February 20 and 21, IOM's assisted voluntary return and reintegration (AVRR) program organized the second in a **series of training sessions on the topic "Application of a rights-based approach to return counselling and assistance"** in Bihać. During the two-day interactive workshop, IOM staff and partner organizations working in the TRCs had the opportunity to learn more about the return counselling methodology and how to identify and respond to the vulnerabilities of beneficiaries in the return process.

To improve and streamline the daily operations of TRC Lipa, IOM supported the improvement of IT equipment, upgraded the internet connection and adapted beneficiary registration processes to allow the introduction of the Smart Camp application. The Smart Camp application is an online software to register beneficiaries residing in TRCs with the aim of providing an overview of the services delivered and to better shape the assistance.



UNHCR



Joint information session on asylum, international protection and voluntary return in TRC Borići @UNHCR/Vaša prava BiH

UNHCR and its partner Vaša prava BiH organized, partially together with IOM, group and individual information sessions on the asylum procedure and international protection in BiH for 343 persons. Majority of the participants were from the Syrian Arab Republic, Afghanistan and Morocco. Vaša prava BiH noted increased interest in free legal aid related to the asylum procedure from people detained in the Immigration Centre as well as in state prison in Vojkovići. These detention and extradition-related cases require specific treatment due to their sensitivity and complexity.

In March, with support from UNHCR and its NGO partners, eight asylum-seekers (six from Sierra Leone, one from Afghanistan and one from the Russian Federation) were transferred from TRC Lipa and from prison to the Asylum Centre (AC) Delijaš. UNHCR's partner Bosnia and Herzegovina Women's Initiative (BHWI) intensified psychosocial support and particularly group activities in AC Delijaš to strengthen community cohesion. In addition, a two-member refugee family from Ecuador, composed of a father and son, was relocated from TRC Ušivak to the Refugee Reception Centre (RCC) Salakovac. To ensure continuity in the refugee boy's education, a transfer was arranged from his former high school in Hadžići to another institution in Mostar, where he is already attending classes regularly. At the end of March, there were 18 persons accommodated in RCC Salakovac, including persons under international protection, asylum-seekers from Palestine and their BiH relatives. Informal educational activities are attended by five asylum-seeking children from Palestine, to prepare for their inclusion in the regular education system in BiH and to learn the B/C/S language.

The first round of voucher distribution for Ukrainians in BiH of 2024 was concluded by UNHCR's partner the Catholic Relief Services, in cooperation with the Red Cross societies: 125 persons benefitted from this distribution, which caters for basic needs, including food and hygiene items.

343

persons provided with information related to asylum in BiH

106

persons assisted with free legal aid related to asylum in BiH

60

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

169

persons assisted with psychosocial support

132

social, recreational and occupational therapy sessions organized

UNICEF



Gender-based violence workshop in TRC Ušivak ©UNICEF 2024

In partnership with Fenix in TRC Borići and World Vision in TRC Ušivak 33 children (18 girls and 15 boys) and 35 parents, out of which three pregnant women, were reached with **infant and young child feeding (IYCF) services**. In March, pediatric nurses were focused on activities and workshops with aim of empowering parents for the challenges that parenthood brings, workshops aimed at educating parents on child development and creating healthy habits and daily individual consultations and support for parents and children.

215 children (16 girls and 199 boys of which 125 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. 175 children (11 girls) in TRCs Borići and Ušivak attended the Akelius Digital Language course. Two children from TRC Ušivak were enrolled in regular classes in primary school Pazarić.

UNICEF/WV Child protection and legal guardian teams provided support with **registration, accommodation and access to services** for 550 unaccompanied and separated children in both TRCs ensuring 24/7 monitoring and support. The team also implemented 187 activities for children in TRCs including educational, creative and sport activities. 258 children were provided with mental health and psychosocial support in both TRCs.

Throughout the reporting period **109 children (28 girls and 81 boys) benefited from activities in the Child Friendly Spaces** in both TRCs. CFS team focused on development-oriented activities, which in March were aimed at strengthening environmental awareness, but also the development of basic life skills, simple educational activities and creative workshops in which all children actively participate. Psychosocial workshops are aimed at developing different scope of skills as: communication, social and emotional intelligence, encouraging attention and concentration and providing emotional support.

708

children on the move benefitting from 24/7 protection and care

151

UASC benefitting from the appointment and support of a legal guardian

215

Refugee and migrant children benefitting from structured non-formal education, language courses and vocational training

50

Refugee and migrant children supported with integration into the formal education system

35

Refugee and migrant children benefitting from Mother-baby corner activities

UNFPA



During March, UNFPA assisted survivors of GBV through comprehensive supportive services. Guided by the core principles of safety, respect, confidentiality, and non-discrimination, case management provided coordinated support for all GBV survivors. Re-assessments of safety, psychological state, as well as other basic and specialized needs were made for survivors through comprehensive GBV services, including PSS, SRH and empowerment. Given the observed increase of single women in TRC Usivak, to prevent GBV, awareness-raising activities on reporting methods and protective measures in case of violence were finalized for female residents travelling alone. In addition, specialized GBV educational sessions were organized for women and adolescent girls accommodated in TRC Borici. GBV support groups were held for vulnerable young men to ensure a safe space for self-expression, to create a supportive environment, and to break preconceived attitudes of masculinity about the imposed social roles of men.

566
Number of comprehensive GBV/PSS services provided to migrants, refugees and asylum seekers

250
Number of SRH services provided to migrants, refugees and asylum seekers

618
Number of empowerment services provided to male migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in line with "Boys and young men on the Move" methodology

399
Number of empowerment services provided to female migrants, refugees and asylum seekers

279
Number of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers educated on GBV

The UNFPA team, in coordination and with the support of the SFA and IOM identified and accommodated 202 vulnerable young men in the Green Zones with a focus on the inclusion of young men in UNFPA supported activities to enhance their protection.

UNFPA observed the need for a coordinated approach aiming for a more adequate response to persons with neuropsychiatric issues that require more focused specialized services to regain independence in everyday life and to achieve overall well-being. Regarding this, a meeting was held in cooperation with IOM and SFA proposing on a cross-section of implemented services and re-assessment of action plans for female residents with neuropsychiatric mental health issues. The UNFPA team, in collaboration with SRH specialists from local health care centers delivered sexual and reproductive health services through individual consultations, group sessions and referrals for in depth examination.

UNFPA in cooperation with partner organizations marked International Women's Day and the Persian New Year promoting rights and equality, as well as the acceptance of cultural differences and the establishment of cohesion.



DRC



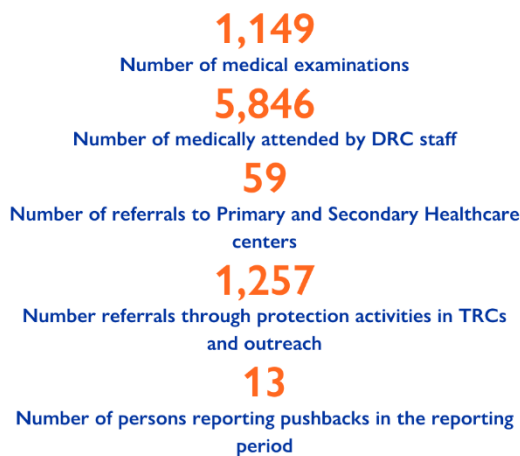
In March, DRC teams noted an increasing number of new arrivals coupled with high turnover in all TRCs in BiH. **Within this period DRC medical teams provided 1554 medical screenings and 5846 medical services.**

Starting from April in the Una Sana Canton (USC), IOM has contracted Primary Health Institutes USC to provide medical screenings and DRC will no longer provide this type of services in USC TRCs.

During the reporting period, DRC reported an increase in a number of beneficiaries with bed bug bites, but also an increased number of lice in family TRCs. In TRC Blažuj, there was an increased number of stray dogs, which were referred to relevant stakeholders.

During the reporting period, the number of hospitalizations on TRC Lipa has doubled. Just in the last week, four beneficiaries were hospitalized, one due to stomach pain, a second one due to cutting on the glass, one psychiatric case and one beneficiary that was found unresponsive in TRC.

DRC MH teams provided five crisis intervention services and 59 individual counseling sessions, 387 follow-up sessions, and 34 initial assessments. MH teams provided 17 referrals to other stakeholders, and psychiatrists provided 68 examinations. During the reporting period, three beneficiaries were hospitalized in support of DRC teams.



Save the Children (SC)



Mathematics class, preparatory school program @SCI 2024

Save the Children's child protection teams continue to play a crucial role in identifying UASC and other vulnerable cases, referring them to appropriate services, and delivering vital child-protection information. In March, outreach teams reached 54 potential UASC, including one girl, which is a 22% decline compared to the previous month. Among 27 families identified in transit in Una-Sana Canton (USC), 15 families were from Türkiye, which is an increased trend. Concerningly, 53 refugees and migrants were reported to have been pushed back from Croatia, of which 19 were UASC. 34% of potential UASC identified in USC reported that they were not registered before in BiH. Appropriate and timely registration is the first step in ensuring adequate protection for children and other vulnerable cases.

In Sarajevo, child protection teams in Blazuj TRC supported **148 potential UASC**, which represents a 55% raise compared to February. In addition, number of 29 children were identified in so-called male families. Thanks to the swift response and cooperation with the SFA, children were accommodated in the designated zone in the Usivak TRC.

In March, 45 children - 35 boys (8 UASC) and 10 girls participated in the Save the Children's preparatory school program in Una-Sana Canton. 29 new boys and 8 new girls were enrolled in classes based on the HEART (Healing and Education Through the Arts) methodology. As part of our non-formal education program, we organized 84 creative and sports workshops for children.

Save the Children met with the Ministry of Labor, Social Policy, Displaced Persons, and Refugees of Canton Sarajevo to extend the Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry, the Cantonal Center for Social Welfare, and Save the Children. We also met with the Border Police in the Bihac area to inform them about continuation of our outreach activities and protection risks for children.

54

potential UASC benefited from the outreach child protection services in 3 cantons

76

children in families benefited from child protection services in and out of TRCs

148

iUASC successfully referred and escorted from the Blazuj to the Usivak TRC

436

referrals to services provided by state institutions and agencies

45

children participating in a preparatory school programme

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MONTH IN PICTURES



"Women's Dialogues" focus group in TRC Ušivak @IOM 2024



Handover of vouchers for Ukrainians in BiH, from CRS to Red Cross partners, ahead of the distribution @UNHCR/CRS 2024



Child Friendly Space activity in TRC Borici @UNICEF 2024



Celebrating International Women's Day in TRC Ušivak @UNFPA 2024



Provision of health services to beneficiaries @DRC 2024



Creative workshop, preparatory school program @SCI 2024



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