

MIXED MOVEMENTS IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA: SITUATION UPDATE

May 2024

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MONTH

KEY FIGURES

1,953

irregular arrivals recorded during the reporting month

10,529

total arrivals in 2024

1,475

persons accommodated in official reception facilities (as of 2 June 2024)

7%

children in families

7%

unaccompanied children

3%

single adult females

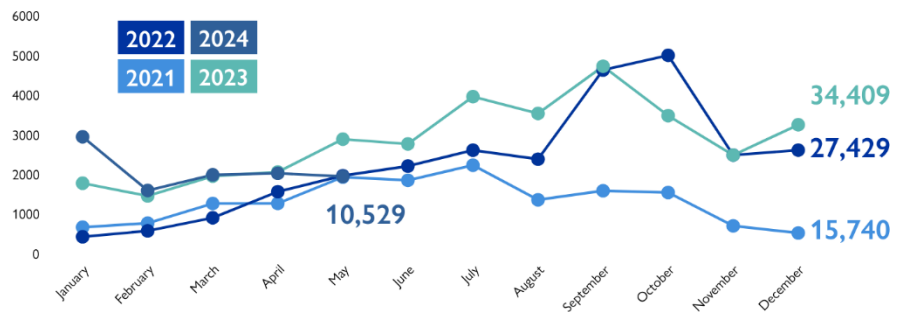
Main nationalities

31% Syrian Arab Republic

19% Afghanistan

15% Morocco

In May 2024¹, authorities recorded 1,953 irregular arrivals in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), indicating a stable trend vis-à-vis the preceding month (2,032 arrivals). Majority declared to originate from the Syrian Arab Republic (31%), Afghanistan (21%), and Türkiye (8%). 83% of them (1,621 persons) were issued an “Attestation on Intention to Seek Asylum” (AISA). In 2024 so far, BiH authorities have registered 10,529 irregular arrivals in BiH, which is 4% more compared with the same period in 2023.



As of the last day of the reporting period, 1,475 migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees were 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 (1,115). The map below depicts the distribution of beneficiaries in BiH as of 2 June 2024.



¹ Reporting period: from 6 May to 2 June 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:

- **During the route observation exercise conducted in May, 609 migrants, asylum seekers and refugees were surveyed** in bus stations at known entry routes, transit locations and exit locations in BiH as well as in four TRCs (Blažuj, Ušivak, Lipa and Borići). Seventy-nine per cent of respondents stated that they had crossed into BiH from Serbia and sixteen per cent from Montenegro. When asked if they were accompanied by people who facilitated their border crossing, 47 per cent of respondents stated they were accompanied.
- **In 2024, the Service for Foreigners' Affairs (SFA) has registered over 100 Algerian nationals in BiH.** According to TRC registration data, 99 per cent of Algerian beneficiaries have been men with an average age of 25 years old. Out of 7,678 people surveyed in 2024, Algerian nationals have the lowest reported rate of border crossing facilitation. According to focus group interviews, including four beneficiaries from Algeria, when asked if they had faced any difficulties or problems along the route, interviewees mentioned that the biggest problem came from the prolonged periods of walking through forests without food and water.
- In May 2024, **the Sector for Asylum of the Ministry of Security registered the asylum claims of 13 persons (13 cases)** and conducted nine Refugee Status Determination interviews (six cases). During the month, five persons (three cases) were granted subsidiary protection, while two negative decisions were issued (two cases). One application was otherwise closed/suspended. As of 31 May, 154 asylum-seekers (115 cases) were awaiting processing and final decisions on their claims in BiH.

INTERAGENCY COORDINATION:

- In early May, the BiH Council of Ministers approved the Information on Creating the Transition Plan, which sets the legal framework for the establishment of the inter-ministerial working group on the transition of the migration response to BiH authorities.
- The Area Camp Coordination and Camp Management meeting for both TRC Ušivak and TRC Blažuj was held on 15 May, with participation of IOM, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNFPA, World Vision, Save the Children, Vasa Prava, Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), Bosnia and Herzegovina Women's Initiative (BHWI), and Directorate for Coordination of Police Bodies (DCPB). **UN agencies and partner organizations discussed the upcoming transition plan towards state agencies**, highlighting the steps taken so far in regard to the TRCs management plan prepared by BiH authorities. The meeting underlined strong coordination among agencies, with a focus on capacity building, supporting vulnerable groups, and addressing operational challenges. In addition, the importance of clear communication and collaboration in maintaining safety and operational efficiency was stressed.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AVAILABLE

- [IOM – Migrant Mobility Situation Report in Bosnia and Herzegovina - March 2024](#)
- [UNHCR - BiH monthly update – April 2024](#)
- [UNFPA Gender-based violence against women and girls on the move study](#)
- [UNICEF - Podrška i prijatelj kojem se djeca mogu povjeriti](#)
- [SCI – Refugees and Migrants at the Balkans Route - Regional Overview](#)
- [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



As of 16 May, under the coordination of IOM, the service of entry medical screenings in reception centres Blažuj and Ušivak was officially transferred from Danish Refugee Council (DRC) to the Primary Health Centres (PHC) of Sarajevo Canton. In each TRC the entry medical screenings will be performed five days a week for all beneficiaries. IOM has been actively engaged in facilitating this transition, coordinating closely with health actors at various levels, as well as ensuring adequate premises and protective equipment for the medical personnel of the PHC. Beneficiaries in need of medical assistance continue to be referred to the centres' infirmaries.

In May, IOM and migrants, refugees and asylum seekers present in the TRCs marked Europe Day. IOM organized creative workshops with educational and recreational components. Through drawing and coloring, the participating beneficiaries were encouraged to think creatively and learn. Following the EU motto, "United in diversity" and thanks to the continued support of the European Union in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), IOM fosters inclusion and diversity in the TRCs, respecting the rich cultural and linguistic diversity.

In TRC Blažuj, through the Innovation LAB project "Colorful Signage", IOM is using the nudge theory to develop directional signs for different services across the centre. These signs made of arrows and dots help beneficiaries easily find service locations such as medical facilities, info containers, registration desk, kitchen and storage. This approach improves IOM's commitment to Accountability to Affected Populations.

IOM organized two training sessions on "Application of a rights-based approach to counselling and assistance on return" for the employees of the Service for Foreigners' Affairs (SFA). The participants learned about the basic principles of the return counselling process. They also discussed how to address the needs and identify migrants, asylum seekers and refugees in a vulnerable situation, with a special focus on providing return counselling to families and unaccompanied and separated children.

801

Number of services provided by the IOM Mobile Team

2,486

Number of new assisted beneficiaries in TRCs

1,628

Number of emergency vulnerability screenings in TRCs

502

Number of persons identified with protection risks and needs

73,527

Number of meals distributed

17,424

Number of non-food items distributed



UNHCR



A group of asylum-seekers visits a bee farm near Bihać @UNHCR

UNHCR and its legal aid partner Vaša prava BiH (VP BiH) organized, in part with IOM, group and individual information sessions on the asylum procedure and international protection in BiH. Majority of the 235 participants originated from the Syrian Arab Republic, Afghanistan and Morocco. VP BiH noticed an increased interest in the asylum procedure in TRCs Ušivak and Blažuj, resulting from referrals received from the Service for Foreigners Affairs.

Following World Bee Day, UNHCR organized a visit of a bee farm near Bihać for a group of asylum-seekers from the Syrian Arab Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Sierra Leone and Nigeria – all residents of TRC Lipa. This excursion was an opportunity for asylum-seekers, hoping to continue their lives in BiH, to learn about artisan beekeeping and its economic potential, as well as of beneficial effects of honeybees on physical and mental health.

UNHCR's psycho-social support partner, the Bosnia and Herzegovina Women's Initiative (BHWI), organizes regular educational mentoring activities in the Refugee Reception Centre in Salakovac to prepare Palestinian asylum-seeking children for their inclusion in the regular education system of BiH and to learn the B/C/S language. A refugee boy from Ecuador also attends this activity to consolidate his level of B/C/S language.

UNHCR and its integration partner the Catholic Relief Services (CRS) are supporting a Syrian entrepreneur woman under subsidiary protection in BiH, through a small business grant, to open a restaurant. A business plan was developed, and potential restaurant premises were visited. Next steps are to start with renovations and to collect the necessary documentation for registration of the business. The goal is to support her to establish a sustainable source of income, promote female entrepreneurship, and empower her as an actor in her community, all of which should contribute to effective integration in the BiH society.

235

persons provided with information related to asylum in BiH

108

persons assisted with free legal aid related to asylum in BiH

54

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

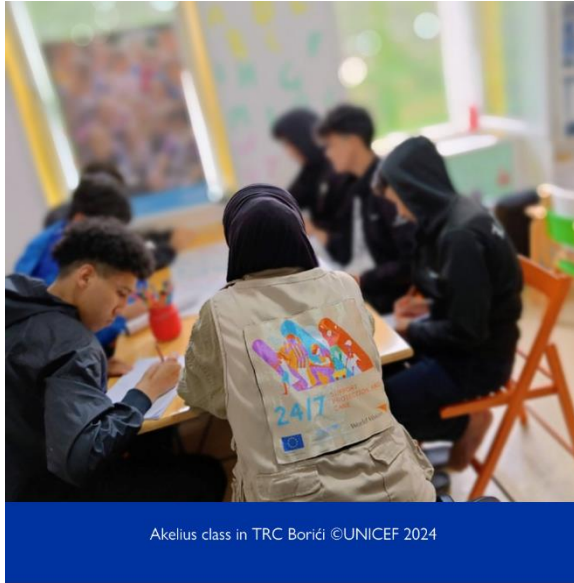
153

persons assisted with psychosocial support

113

social, recreational and occupational therapy sessions organized

UNICEF



In partnership with Fenix in TRC Borići and World Vision in TRC Ušivak 45 children (24 girls and 21 boys), 55 parents and 13 pregnant women were reached with infant and young child feeding (IYCF) services. In May, pediatric nurses were focused on activities and workshops related to benefits of breastfeeding for mother and child, children health and hygiene with references to different diseases and consultancy with pregnant women about nutrition and taking supplements during pregnancy.

332 children (44 girls and 288 boys, including 133 unaccompanied children) were reached with structured non-formal education, including foreign and local language learning and support in learning and catch-up classes. 232 children (29 girls) in TRCs attended the Akelius Digital Language course. Seven children from TRC Ušivak were enrolled in regular classes in primary school, while 17 children (2 girls) were supported with preparatory classes in two primary schools in CS.

UNICEF/WV Child protection and legal guardian teams provided support with registration, accommodation and access to services for 484 unaccompanied children (including 4 girls) in both TRCs ensuring 24/7 monitoring and support. Child protection teams planned and organized 181 psychosocial, educational, creative, and sports activities for unaccompanied children and children in families in both TRCs. 231 children were reached with mental health and psychosocial support in TRC Usivak and Borici through 31 individual sessions and 14 group sessions.

The regular monthly Una-Sana Child Protection Working Group meeting was held with regular topics discussed, including information sharing, addressing key priorities, and coordinating next steps when it comes to protection of children on the move. The working group ensures effective coordination of key actors who provide services in reception centers.

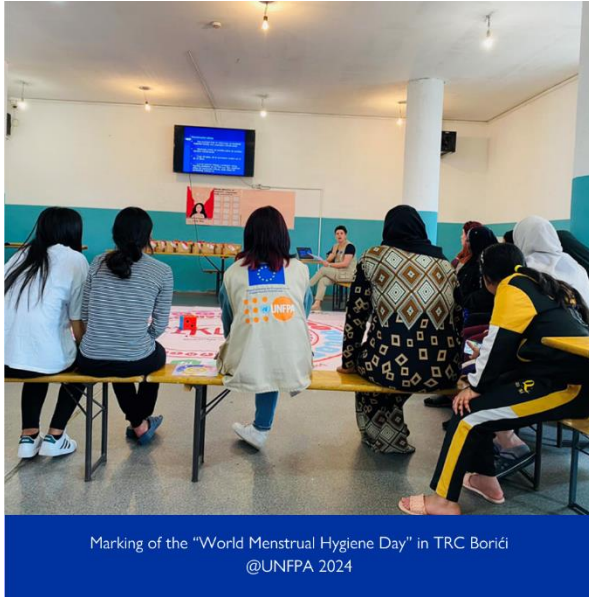
Throughout the reporting period 128 children (42 girls and 86 boys) benefited from activities in the Child Friendly Spaces in both TRCs.

- 598**
children on the move benefitting from 24/7 protection and care
- 195**
UASC benefitting from the appointment and support of a legal guardian
- 332**
Refugee and migrant children benefitting from structured non-formal education, language courses and vocational training
- 44**
Refugee and migrant children supported with integration into the formal education system
- 45**
Refugee and migrant children benefitting from Mother-baby corner activities



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UNFPA



During May, UNFPA provided supportive services to GBV survivors, with a noted slight increase in reports of intimate partner violence perpetrated either in the countries of origin or during onward movement. UNFPA intensified efforts to disseminate safety information to mitigate and prevent potential risks associated with violence. Specialized GBV educational sessions were held for residents in TRCs. These sessions included a unique educational series titled "GBV through Language Learning," which introduced participants to fundamental concepts of GBV while promoting language learning and vocabulary expansion.

With the arrival of women who are travelling alone, UNFPA implemented information-sharing activities to inform about available supportive services in the UNFPA Women and Girls Center and to raise awareness about GBV. Additionally, efforts were made to assist in accommodating vulnerable women, ensuring they were close to protection services.

UNFPA held GBV Working Group meetings in Una-Sana Canton and Sarajevo Canton to discuss trends, challenges, and statistics related to GBV, fostering closer cooperation between agencies, and providing feedback on response effectiveness.

In coordination with the Service for Foreigners Affairs, UNFPA held a Green Zone Council meeting at TRC Lipa, engaging young residents in discussions about house rules and encouraging their participation in TRC activities to prevent violence and ensure a safer community environment.

Additionally, UNFPA, with SFA and IOM, provided protection-oriented assistance to 201 vulnerable young men, focusing on their accommodation in Green Zones and active participation in empowerment activities. SRH services were delivered in coordination with local health centers, including assistance to pregnant women. UNFPA team marked "International Menstrual Hygiene Day" on May 28, the UNFPA gynecologists organized educational session with women and girls on the topic about menstruation after which UNFPA team held a set of interactive workshops including an educational game "Ciklus" with female residents of TRCs.

- 526**
Number of comprehensive GBV/PSS services provided to migrants, refugees and asylum seekers
- 317**
Number of SRH services provided to migrants, refugees and asylum seekers
- 317**
Number of empowerment services provided to male migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in line with "Boys and young men on the Move" methodology
- 462**
Number of empowerment services provided to female migrants, refugees and asylum seekers
- 218**
Number of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers educated on GBV



DRC



In May, DRC medical teams provided 670 medical screenings (for the first half of the month) in Sarajevo Canton and provided 4538 medical services.

During the reporting month of May, in line with the transition of medical screening in Sarajevo Canton a handover from DRC to Primary Health Care SC was organized.

DRC provided full support to the PHC teams and provided detailed training to PHC staff on proper physical medical screening, what to focus on, what communicable diseases to track, and how referral pathways are functioning.

Regarding secondary health care level, the DRC team noticed an increased demand for cultural mediation, as requested by doctors, and an increased number of specific medications delivered to hospitalized beneficiaries.

In TRC Borići, medication for HIV patients has been procured and successfully provided to the beneficiary. A child from Kongo with a rare blood disease left TRC after several days and did not return. In TRC Borići, the DRC team noted one beneficiary abusing insulin and had several consultations with him. A woman from Cameroon experienced a violent pushback at the Croatian border and was referred to EC and to SHC. There are no critical injuries, and UNFPA has been involved in the case.

985

Number of medical examinations

3490

Number of medically attended by DRC staff

26

Number of referrals to Primary and Secondary Healthcare centers

70

Number of referrals to psychiatrist

549

Number of psychological services provided

Save the Children (SC)



Preparatory School Programme – Math Class @SCI 2024

241

children benefited from the child protection services in TRC Blazuj

73

potential UASC benefited from outreach child protection services

72

children travelling with families benefited from child protection services out of TRCs

27

children (21 boys and 6 girls) were newly enrolled in a preparatory school programme in USK, out of which 10 unaccompanied and separated boys

75

locations were visited across USK by the outreach teams

Save the Children's child protection teams operate in Una-Sana Canton and in Sarajevo, and, in coordination with relevant Centres for Social Work, identify families with children, UASC and other vulnerable cases, refer them to key services, and deliver child-friendly information.

Outreach teams in Una-Sana Canton reached 69 UASC (slight increase from last month) the majority coming from Afghanistan (28), Morocco (14), Syria (9), and Türkiye (7); and 28 families (approximately 50% less than in April), the majority from Türkiye (15), including one male family from Afghanistan. Children and families with Turkish passports continue to face challenges in accessing accommodation and services, including after being pushed back, which exposes them to increased risks. The outreach team in Sarajevo supported 4 UASC from Afghanistan identified outside of the reception centers.

Child protection teams in Blažuj TRC provided support to 224 newly arrived potential UASC (around 20% increase compared to April), mostly coming from Syria, Egypt, Morocco and Afghanistan, and provided support, referrals, and assistance with transfer to the designated zoned for UASC in reception center Ušivak. The team also supported the relocation of 14 male families from Syria that included 17 children.

Two UASC were injured, as per their statement, they fell from a bridge when crossing the border between Serbia and BiH and were referred further for medical assistance. Incidents of this type are being reported and highlight the risks of the migration journey.

Save the Children has ensured 1-year long funding for continuation of support to the Ministry of Labour, Social Policy, Displaced Persons and Refugees of Sarajevo Canton, and the Cantonal Center for Social Welfare Sarajevo, who ensure 24/7 identification and support to UASC out of reception centers and in the Blazuj TRC.

In May, 28 boys and 10 girls participated in the preparatory school program in Una-Sana Canton run by the SC. The motivation for school remains the major challenge for children and their families, while in transit.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MONTH IN PICTURES



Health session dedicated to oral health and hygiene in TRC Ušivak @IOM 2024



Women in need of international protection take part in a jewellery-making workshop in TRC Ušivak @UNHCR/BHWI 2024



Mother and Baby Corner in TRC Borčić ©UNICEF 2024



Joint awareness raising activity on maintaining cleanliness of living spaces in TRC Ušivak @UNFPA 2024



Health workshop with beneficiaries @DRC 2024



Information sharing for newly arrived UASC about safe accommodation in TRC Ušivak @SCI 2024



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