

# MIXED MOVEMENTS IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA: SITUATION UPDATE

## August 2023

### HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MONTH

#### KEY FIGURES

**3,542**

irregular arrivals recorded during the reporting month

**20,440**

total arrivals in 2023

**2,477**

persons accommodated in official reception facilities (as of 6 August 2023)

**3%**

children in families

**7%**

unaccompanied children

**1%**

single adult females

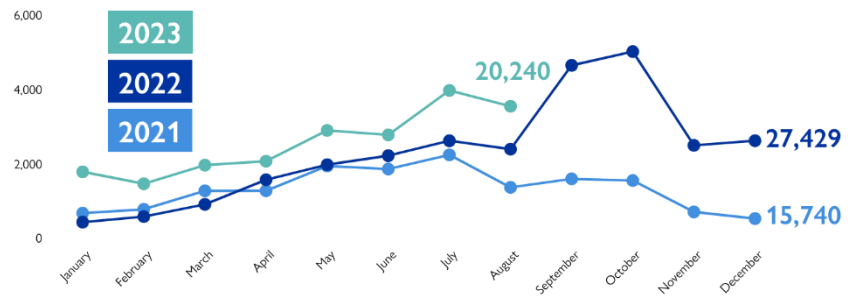
#### Main nationalities

**60%** Afghanistan

**21%** Morocco

**4%** Pakistan

In August 2023<sup>1</sup>, authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) recorded 3,542 irregular arrivals, a decrease by 11 per cent compared to the previous month (3,967). The majority of new arrivals declared to be from Afghanistan (50%), Morocco (27%) and Iran (Islamic Republic of) (4%). Among those, 92 per cent (3,272) were issued an “Attestation on Intention to Seek Asylum” (AISA). In the first eight months of 2023, BiH authorities have registered 20,440 irregular arrivals in BiH, an increase by more than half compared to the same eight months in 2022.



As of the last day of the reporting period, 2,477 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 19 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 September 2023.



<sup>1</sup> Reporting period: from 7 August to 3 September 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:

- Arrivals continue to be high during the summer period. In August, TRC Blažuj recorded the highest number of arrivals in a single day since the beginning of the year, with more than 500 beneficiaries registered on 23 August alone.
- According to **focus groups interviews conducted with Afghan beneficiaries in TRCs**, respondents indicated that they are generally paying for their journeys in instalments, with the total average cost being between 5,000 and 7,000 USD. The costs of these instalments depend on multiple factors, including who is travelling as well as the smugglers' networks, the complexity of the route and the mode of transport. All those interviewed travelled from Afghanistan to Iran via Pakistan. From Tehran, people were driven to the Turkish border. From Istanbul, most people travelled to Edirne and crossed the border into Bulgaria. They tended to spend very little time in Bulgaria, and instead moved rapidly to Serbia. From Belgrade, they were driven to the border with BiH. Many Afghans interviewed had suffered harrowing accounts of violence, theft and abuse by smugglers in the transit countries on their way to BiH.
- In August 2023, **11 persons registered their asylum claims with the Ministry of Security (MoS)** – Sector for Asylum (six cases), five Refugee Status Determination interviews were conducted, five persons were granted subsidiary protection and three persons had their claim rejected. One application was otherwise closed. As of 31 August, 88 asylum-seekers (58 cases) await processing and final decision in BiH.

#### INTERAGENCY COORDINATION:

- One of the **Interagency Coordination** meetings held in August focused on the revision of the standard operating procedures related to health services in the TRCs. The participants aimed to identify the most effective and sustainable approach for handling medical escort services, not only during the day but also during the night shift. Additionally, discussions centered around establishing a system for medical advisory support to ensure continuous and 24/7 accessible medical assistance for beneficiaries.
- The **Interagency Protection Coordination** meetings' discussions focused on the design and of an informative poster designed to improve beneficiaries' awareness and information in the TRCs. The poster provides detailed information about house rules. The notices were prominently displayed within all accommodation units to ensure clear communication and understanding among the residents.

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AVAILABLE

- [IOM – Migrant Mobility Situation Report in Bosnia and Herzegovina - August 2023](#)
- [UNHCR - BiH Operational update – August 2023](#)
- [UNFPA - Monthly Operational Update – April-June 2023](#)
- [UNICEF - Podrška i prijateljij kojem se djeca mogu povjeriti](#)
- [SCI – Summer School](#)
- [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



Community Representatives Council meeting in TRC Ušivak  
@IOM 2023

**1,506**

Number of services provided by the IOM Mobile Team

**8,956**

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

**6,443**

Number of emergency vulnerability screenings in TRCs

**907**

Number of persons identified with protection risks and needs

**98,353**

Number of meals distributed

**45,439**

Number of non-food items distributed

In TRC Blažuj, the collective accommodation area was reopened in August to ensure that all persons arriving in the Centre access to immediate assistance and accommodation. Anyone arriving in the evening and night is accommodated in the pre-registration area until formally registered by the SFA. IOM carries on emergency screenings to ensure proper referrals and tailored assistance to vulnerable beneficiaries.

In August, the IOM Protection Team raised the awareness of beneficiaries on the risks related to Trafficking in Human Beings and Smuggling of Persons on the Move. For example, in TRC Lipa, leaflets which were translated into various languages and previously approved by the Service of Foreigners' Affairs (SFA) were distributed to all beneficiaries.

The No Nation Fashion (NNF) brand and social enterprise were featured prominently at the 29th edition of the Sarajevo Film Festival. Promoting inclusion, diversity, and sustainability, Maja Čengić Miralem, the Head of Music and Entertainment Program at BHRT, wore an NNF creation made by migrants and refugees, and BiH fashion designers. Meanwhile, at the NNF corner in the Creative Zone of TRC Lipa, in joint coordination with beneficiaries and representatives of the Faculty of Engineering, Department of Design of Bihać, children's beddings were tailored and sewn for the needs of the Center for Children without Parental Care "Duga".

The Chamber Orchestra of Siero (OCAS) from Spain visited the TRC Blažuj, determined to connect people and cultures with the universal language of music with their musical performance. After visiting Poland and Ukraine last summer, they arrived in BiH this year with the same goal - to build friendship and understanding. The concert was organized in cooperation with the Academic Cultural Center of the University of Sarajevo, Seljo Cultural and Artistic Society and Corona ensemble.



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

## UNHCR



As part of the Human Rights Day programme of the 29th Sarajevo Film Festival, UNHCR together with IOM held a [workshop with 30 European Youth Ambassadors](#) from the Western Balkan to discuss portrayal of refugees and migrants in film.

UNHCR, together with its partner **Vaša prava BiH**, organized **39 information sessions** on asylum and international protection in BiH, including joint sessions with IOM. Majority of participants were from Afghanistan and Morocco, among which many could be in need of international protection. For the first time, two sessions took place in the recently opened reception centre for minor asylum-seekers and unaccompanied vulnerable children. A total of 18 children from Afghanistan attended, accompanied by their legal guardians. Overall, an increase was noted in the number of persons who expressed interest to start the asylum procedure in BiH.

UNHCR's partner the **Bosnia and Herzegovina Women's Initiative (BHWI)** provided comprehensive support to persons granted international protection in their integration path. Through social accompaniment, three persons were introduced to their neighbourhood, shops, bank, health centre, and other services. While these activities contribute to access to rights and familiarization with the new environment, they also participate to decrease possible stigmatization and foster acceptance. One of them was empowered to act as a peer educator and to assist other newcomers in need in the integration journey.

**Five persons under subsidiary protection started working for a retail company** with assistance from UNHCR and its partners. Each has a personal mentor to help them adapt during the first month. UNHCR's partner BHWI supported with the identification process of beneficiaries, preparation for the interviews, administrative aspects, while providing psychosocial support in this process to start a self-sufficient life.

**438**

persons provided with information related to asylum in BiH

**79**

persons assisted with free legal aid related to asylum in BiH

**17**

people awaiting registration of their asylum claim with the assistance of UNHCR / Vaša Prava BiH

**2,369**

persons assisted with psychosocial support

**102**

social, recreational and occupational therapy sessions organized



# UNICEF



Akelius class in TRC Ušivak @UNICEF 2023

In partnership with Fenix in TRC Borići and World Vision in TRC Ušivak, 59 children (29 girls and 30 boys) and 73 parents out of which 5 pregnant women were reached with **infant and young child feeding (IYCF) services**, empowering mothers to connect with their children and build healthy habits in children.

**184 children (27 girls and 157 boys of which 96 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. Children in Borići and Ušivak utilized the Akelius Digital Language course and in partnership with Save the Children, the course has also been used in schools as part of the summer school for local and children on the move, facilitating integration in the local community.

In partnership with the Institute for development of pre-university education CS, **UNICEF has supported the capacity development of 76 foreign language teachers** in terms of digital competencies, blended learning approaches and the use of the Akelius course.

**802**  
children on the move benefitting from 24/7 protection and care

**125**  
UASC benefitting from the appointment and support of a legal guardian

**184**  
Refugee and migrant children benefitting from structured non-formal education, language courses and vocational training

**59**  
Refugee and migrant children benefitting from Mother-baby corner activities

**UNICEF organized regular monthly Child Protection Working Groups meetings** at the Una-Sana Canton level as part of the child protection coordination. Child Protection Working Groups provide a quality space to discuss key developments, share trends and updates and improve coordination. At the meeting of the Sarajevo Child Protection Working Group scheduled for 8 September 2023, the services and referral mechanism of the newly opened reception center for vulnerable categories will be presented.

**UNICEF/WV Child protection and legal guardian teams provided support with registration, accommodation and access to services** for 802 new children in both TRCs ensuring 24/7 monitoring and support. The team also implemented 176 activities for children in TRCs including educational, creative and sport activities. 486 children were provided with mental health and psychosocial support in both TRCs through individual and group sessions.

Throughout the reporting period **73 children (23 girls) benefited from activities in the Child Friendly Spaces** in both TRCs.



## UNFPA



UNFPA provided comprehensive GBV support for vulnerable women and girls, as well as adolescent boys and young men ensuring protection and coordinated provision of necessary safety services. UNFPA responded to the needs of survivors by connecting them with relevant services both within the TRCs and institutionally. UNFPA held the GBV Working Group for CS with 14 representatives of partner organizations strengthening a comprehensive and coordinated approach to GBV. In addition, UNFPA implemented extensive GBV trainings for 21 SFA personnel in TRC Lipa with a focus on awareness raising, recognition, prevention and reporting of GBV. Moreover, the training highlighted UNFPA and SFA's Green Zone mechanism, fostering collaboration and support between UNFPA and SFA in their joint commitment to provide protection for the most vulnerable age categories.

UNFPA delivered diverse MHPSS services for women and girls within the UNFPA Women and Girls centers, as well male GBV survivors in the Boys and Young Men Center in the form of targeted individual sessions and diverse group support. Individual sessions included an initial assessment of the mental state of newly arrived residents, monitoring the condition and use of therapy among psycho-pharmacotherapy users.

In close collaboration with local health centers, UNFPA ensured that residents of TRCs had access to quality sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services. Considering the challenges of maintaining a healthy pregnancy during movement, SRH sessions were also implemented on the topic of family planning, providing insight into relevant information that leads to making informed decisions.

UNFPA continued to empower women and girls, boys and young men through well-organized educational, socializing and creative group workshops and BOTM sessions, helping improve capacities, good communication and important life skills. UNFPA implemented a series of sports activities both in the TRCs and in HSC Arena in Bihać with a total of 238 young male participants taking part in various sports disciplines.

**559**

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

**251**

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

**884**

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

**274**

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

**74**

Number of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers educated on GBV

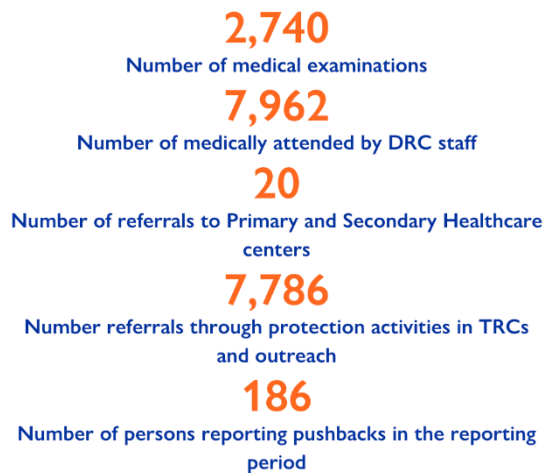
## DRC



During the month of August, DRC Medical teams performed more than 6000 medical screenings for the new arrivals in the TRCs. When comparing with August, medical screenings stayed similar in number but increased by more than 30% when compared to July.

Beneficiaries are arriving in larger numbers during the weekends and nights, which puts more pressure on DRC teams when many screenings are performed. The DRC Medical team noticed that beneficiaries are refusing further treatment on the secondary health level, especially the orthopedic department.

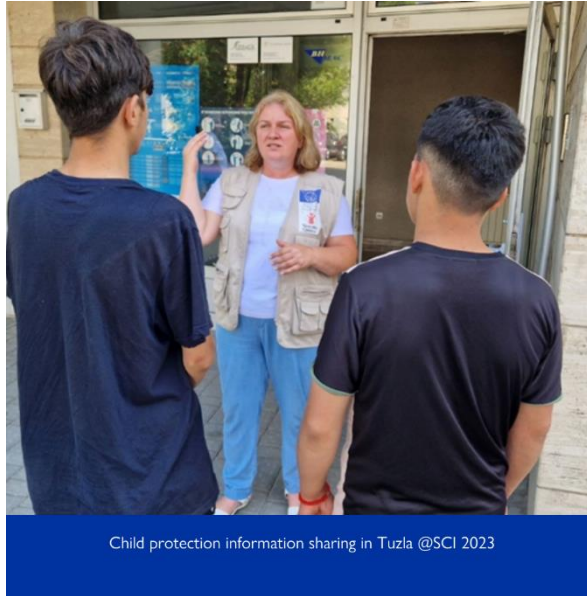
Beneficiaries informed DRC that surgeries, plasters, or other orthopedic equipment are preventing them from leaving. There is an increased number of enterocolitis as well as continuous growth of scabies and secondary infections due to insect bites. DRC during August worked on health awareness activities regarding Scabies, Dentalgia and Diabetes.



### DRC co-partner: Médecins du Monde (MDM)

- Beneficiaries on individual counseling sessions report dominant anxiety symptomatology, anxious thoughts, excessive worry, being tense, and always present problems with sleeping and insomnia.
- Beneficiaries also report intrusive thoughts of traumatic events, flashbacks, some present traces of self-harm from before, muscle tension, changes in appetite, lack of energy, and depressed mood and withdrawal symptoms.
- There were few cases of beneficiaries with psychotic symptoms but not in acute state, and all of them were regularly followed by side of MdM psychologist and psychiatrist.

## Save the Children (SC)



**142**

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

**101**

Referrals to services for children outside reception centers

**334**

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

**122**

Children enrolled in the Summer School programme

**631**

Information-sharing instances to children and adults

In August, SC assisted 142 UASC outside reception centers in Tuzla, Sarajevo, and Una-Sana Canton, 85% of whom were from Afghanistan. Collaborating with state institutions, our child protection teams continued providing vital services like information sharing, referrals, psychosocial support, temporary legal guardianship, and escort.

In August, SC coordinated the referral and transfer of 334 potential UASC from TRC Blažuj to TRC Ušivak. Together with the Cantonal Center for Social Welfare Sarajevo and the Center for Social Welfare Ilidža, SC ensured comprehensive protection psychosocial support and facilitated escort services to the TRC Ušivak. During August, child protection coverage increased in TRC Blažuj, and in addition to regular activities during working hours, significant efforts in child welfare services have been provided 24/7 on-call duties in cooperation with the Social Workers in front of the Cantonal Center for Social Work Sarajevo. Among unaccompanied boys, the SC team identified and supported one UASC girl.

The Summer School activities concluded on August 18th, providing two months of valuable learning, play, and newfound friendships for local elementary school children and their peers from TRC Borići. On the last day of school, they gathered for a memorable closing ceremony, receiving diplomas and educational materials as gifts for their upcoming first day of school.

A total of 122 children participated in the summer school program, with 54 boys and 68 girls among them, of which 37 migrant and refugee children (26 boys, 11 girls), including 7 UASC (6 Afghanistan, 1 Morocco). Eighteen of them were enrolled in August.

Starting from August 22nd, migrant and refugee children continued to attend the obligatory preparatory school program in Elementary School "Harmani I."



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MONTH IN PICTURES



Meal distribution in TRC Blažuj @IOM 2023



Workshop to discuss portrayal of refugees and migrants in film during the Sarajevo Film Festival @UNHCR 2023



Child-Friendly Schools activity in TRC Ušivak @UNICEF 2023



Gender Based Violence training for SFA staff in TRC Lipa @UNFPA 2023



Introductory educational sessions for SFA staff in TRC Lipa @MdM 2023 (DRC partner)



PSS activities while waiting for accommodation in TRC Ušivak @SCI 2023



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