



**UNHCR**  
The UN Refugee Agency



# 2022 PARTICIPATORY ASSESSMENT REPORT

## IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Protection and integration of asylum-seekers and persons  
granted international protection in Bosnia and Herzegovina

“

*We don't need Germany  
or Europe if we have  
normal life in BiH.*

*Somalian asylum-seeker  
in TRC Miral*

”

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# Acknowledgements

This report is based on the Participatory Assessment conducted during February 2022 with persons who received an “Attestation of Expressed Intent to Seek Asylum” (AISA), asylum-seekers, recognized refugees and persons granted subsidiary protection in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

UNHCR expresses its gratitude to all persons that participated in this assessment as well as to all partners for their support in carrying out this exercise.

## Acronyms

<b>AGDM</b>	Age, Gender, and Diversity Mainstreaming
<b>AISA</b>	Attestation of Expressed Intent to Seek Asylum
<b>BHWI</b>	Foundation of Bosnia and Herzegovina Women’s Initiative
<b>BiH</b>	Bosnia and Herzegovina
<b>CSW</b>	Centre for Social Welfare
<b>EUAA</b>	European Union Agency for Asylum
<b>FGD</b>	Focus Group Discussion
<b>LGBTQI</b>	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex
<b>MFT</b>	Multifunctional Team
<b>MHRR</b>	Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees
<b>SFA</b>	Service for Foreigners’ Affairs
<b>TRC</b>	Temporary Reception Center
<b>UASC</b>	Unaccompanied or Separated Child(ren)

# Summary of Key Findings

**Beneficiaries of subsidiary protection overwhelmingly shared that their status comes with major limitations**, including lack of travel documentation and right to family reunification, as well as permanent residence.

**Asylum-seekers and refugees reported that most institutions did not recognize their documents** (asylum-seeker cards or proof of status) which prevented them from opening bank accounts, registering with employment bureaus and getting a job.

**The length of the asylum procedure is the biggest deterrent for many to apply for asylum or consider BiH a durable solution.** All surveyed overwhelmingly communicated that the biggest concern was the BiH asylum procedure length, efficiency and quality.

**Most people lacked information about asylum, UNHCR, partners, or their legal status in BiH.** Moreover, for those **outside Temporary Reception Centers (TRCs), access to information and services was severely limited.**

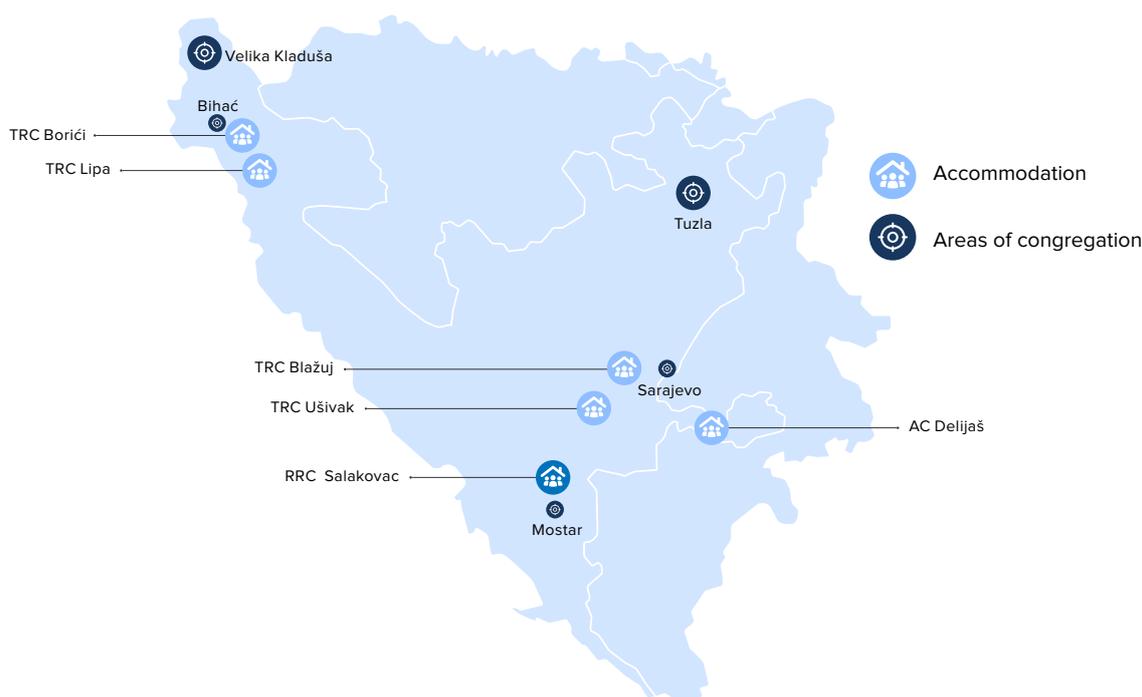
Many asylum-seekers and refugees expressed **concerns about security in the TRCs.**

**LGBTQI+ refugees and asylum-seekers are at heightened risk of violence and exploitation.** They also face specific challenges and require tailored support. Registration authorities do not recognize gender identity and sexual orientation as a specific need and/or fail to appropriately register unconventional family structures.

**Persons of concern to UNHCR from Sub-Saharan Africa reported experiencing discrimination and violence at a higher rate** than other populations. Many persons from Sub-Saharan Africa may need international protection but are unwilling to pursue it in BiH.

**Unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) face huge pressure from families and communities to continue onward** to Western European countries.

**Very few asylum-seekers and persons under international protection initially intended to remain in Bosnia and Herzegovina but changed their minds after repeated failed attempts** to move onward or facing other difficulties.



Bosnia and Herzegovina map with marked reception centres



Farsi

You have right to have a translator, lawyer and interpreter

3. Negotiation of Asylum application

4. You receive an asylum seeker card

5. Interview for Refugee Status Determination (Asylum)

6. Decision on Status (within 6 months after start-day)

14. Other solutions will need to be negotiated with your guardian and your sponsor to your home country

1. You apply for asylum	2. You receive an asylum seeker card	3. Negotiation of Asylum application	4. You receive an asylum seeker card	5. Interview for Refugee Status Determination (Asylum)	6. Decision on Status (within 6 months after start-day)	7. You receive a decision on your asylum application	8. You receive a decision on your asylum application	9. You receive a decision on your asylum application	10. You receive a decision on your asylum application	11. You receive a decision on your asylum application	12. You receive a decision on your asylum application	13. You receive a decision on your asylum application	14. Other solutions will need to be negotiated with your guardian and your sponsor to your home country
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# Introduction

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency conducted a series of Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with persons who received an AISA, asylum-seekers, recognized refugees and persons granted subsidiary protection across Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) to identify their main concerns and key recommendations around protection and integration.

A regular part of UNHCR's programming, the Participatory Assessment provides an opportunity for UNHCR and others to assess the existing humanitarian programmes and adjust future initiatives in line with refugees' feedback.

For the purpose of this assessment, 129 persons participated in the discussions.

Participants were residents in TRCs in Sarajevo Canton, Tuzla Canton and Una Sana Canton and persons under international protection in BiH residing in private accommodation.



# Methodology

## Objectives

Asylum-seekers and persons under international protection must be at the centre of the decision-making process when it comes to their protection and well-being. To gain a deeper understanding of the protection problems they face, it is essential to consult them directly and to listen to them. Their right to participate in decisions on matters that affect their lives is enshrined in general recommendations of human rights bodies and UNHCR's policies and guidelines, in particular the Agenda for Protection.<sup>1</sup> From the outset, it is crucial that refugees from diverse backgrounds, women and men, boys and girls, contribute to the identification and definition of the problems they face and participate in the design of programmes that aim to serve, assist, and protect them.

Based on the principles of age, gender, and diversity mainstreaming (AGDM) and in line with, a rights-based and community-based approach, the Participatory Assessment exercise was carried out holding separate discussions with women, girls, boys, and men, including adolescents. Smaller group discussions allowed not only more speaking time for participants, but greater and more in-depth exploration of each point of view. This exercise was conducted to gather accurate information on the protection risks they face and their underlying causes, to understand their coping capacities, and to hear their proposed solutions.<sup>2</sup>

The 2022 Participatory Assessment exercise, which focused on asylum-seekers and persons under international protection in BiH, was carried out with the following main objectives:

- Meet asylum-seekers and persons under international protection in BiH, including those with specific vulnerabilities such as UASC

and the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex (LGBTQI<sup>3</sup>) community and learn about their current situation, including the challenges they face and their proposed solutions in terms of their local integration and access to rights;

- Feed information and findings from the Participatory Assessment into the situational analysis and multi-year planning of UNHCR BiH;
- Gather data to establish the baseline for specific impact indicators;
- Apply AGDM, identify main protection risks and gaps, as well as their underlying causes;
- Share the findings from the assessment and the recommendations for future planning and advocacy purposes.



Focus group discussion in TRC Borići  
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<sup>1</sup><https://www.unhcr.org/protection/globalconsult/3e637b194/agenda-protection-third-edition.html>

<sup>2</sup>UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UNHCR Tool for Participatory Assessment in Operations, May 2006, First edition, available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/462df4232.html> [accessed 31 October 2022]

<sup>3</sup>*The intersection with racial discrimination, on the grounds of race, color, descent, national or ethnic origin, makes LGBTQI+ people even more vulnerable to discrimination and hate-motivated violence. Several international instruments and human rights mechanisms explicitly recognize the impact of intersecting forms of discrimination on the enjoyment of human rights.*

<https://www.un.org/en/fight-racism/vulnerable-groups/lgbtqi-plus>



Focus group discussion in TRC Borići  
© UNHCR Bosnia and Herzegovina/Vaša Prava

## Limitations

Due to the diversity of the refugee and asylum-seeking population in BiH, interpretation was challenging and discussions had to be grouped into smaller sessions based on language. The absence of some key language interpreters (e.g. Bangla) also limited the scope of the exercise in a way that some nationalities were not included to the best possible extent.

In addition, it was conducted in February when cold weather and sanitary rules linked to the COVID-19 pandemic prevented the gathering of large groups.

Finally, UNHCR consulted with persons who received an AISA, asylum-seekers, recognized refugees and persons granted subsidiary protection living in TRCs, with whom UNHCR is in regular contact. However, it was more challenging for UNHCR to identify and include those living in private accommodation, with whom UNHCR has less regular contact, but whose input would be valuable for strategic planning.

## Refugees from Ukraine



The Participatory Assessment was completed by mid-February, before the start of the war in Ukraine which has caused civilian casualties and destruction of civilian infrastructure, forcing people to flee their homes for safety, protection and assistance. Nevertheless, the assessment of the situation of persons who fled Ukraine and sought refuge in BiH, their needs and capacities was conducted through regular field and monitoring visits by UNHCR and its partners, the Government of BiH, as well as by the Red Cross societies and other humanitarian actors. In addition, the exchange of information and coordination of activities related to persons who fled Ukraine and sought refuge in BiH, the UN Country Team agreed to make use of the already existing structure led by UNHCR, the Protection Sector Working Group which was established for the refugees and migrants situation within BiH.

## Multifunctional Team composition and key themes

In February 2022, a multifunctional team (MFT) composed of representatives of UNHCR and its local partners - the Bosnia and Herzegovina Women Initiative (BHWI) and Vaša Prava BiH, held preparatory meetings for the Participatory Assessment in order to:

- Review existing information and map the different profiles of persons under international protection and asylum-seekers disaggregated by age, gender, status (recognized refugee/subsidiary protection), country of origin, location, accommodation type, vulnerability, etc.;
- Agree upon methods of enquiry, i.e. focus group discussions (FGDs) and individual visits to persons living in private accommodation in Sarajevo, Una-Sana, and Tuzla Cantons, and select themes to be discussed during the FGDs and one-on-one meetings among the internal list of AGDM protection risks<sup>4</sup>;
- Develop a concrete action plan for the FGDs with joint questionnaires<sup>5</sup> and a KoBo tool<sup>6</sup> for FGDs, and ensure systematization of the gathered information, arranging time, place and format of the discussions.

Following the guidance in UNHCR's *Tool for Participatory Assessment in Operations*<sup>7</sup>, the questionnaires for FGDs were developed with key themes of specific protection risks considered relevant to each focus group. The MFT led the FGDs organized around these themes, which allowed for more detailed discussions of key protection risks and causes, as well as for the identification of communities' capacities and recommended solutions to overcome these risks.



*My primary needs are job, normal life, enough to pay a rent, eat and put a bit aside. I would love to learn Bosnian language and work as a hairdresser.*

*Asylum-seeker from Syria*



*I would not feel comfortable calling local police, as I believe that they would side with their own people.*

*Asylum-seeker from Afghanistan*



<sup>4</sup>See attached Standard Definitions of AGDM Protection Risks and Causes for the whole list

<sup>5</sup>See attached Questionnaire for details

<sup>6</sup><https://enketo.unhcr.org/x/#WYBymPKd>

<sup>7</sup>See page 29 of UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), *UNHCR Tool for Participatory Assessment in Operations*, May 2006, First edition, available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/462df4232.html> [accessed 31 October 2022]

## Profile of the participants

In total, 129 women, girls, boys and men were consulted as part of this Participatory Assessment exercise in Sarajevo, Tuzla and Una-Sana Cantons. The focus groups were:

- Persons under international protection: persons granted refugee status and those granted with a subsidiary protection status (with an emphasis on those who received their status within the past two years);
- Asylum-seekers registered with the Sector for Asylum of the Ministry of Security
- Persons who received an AISA.

Dedicated FGDs were also held with persons of specific profiles:

- Unaccompanied and separated children (UASC);

- Persons with diverse sexual orientation and gender identities (LGBTQI+).
- Persons from Sub-Saharan Africa, which constitute a new profile of persons arriving in the country.

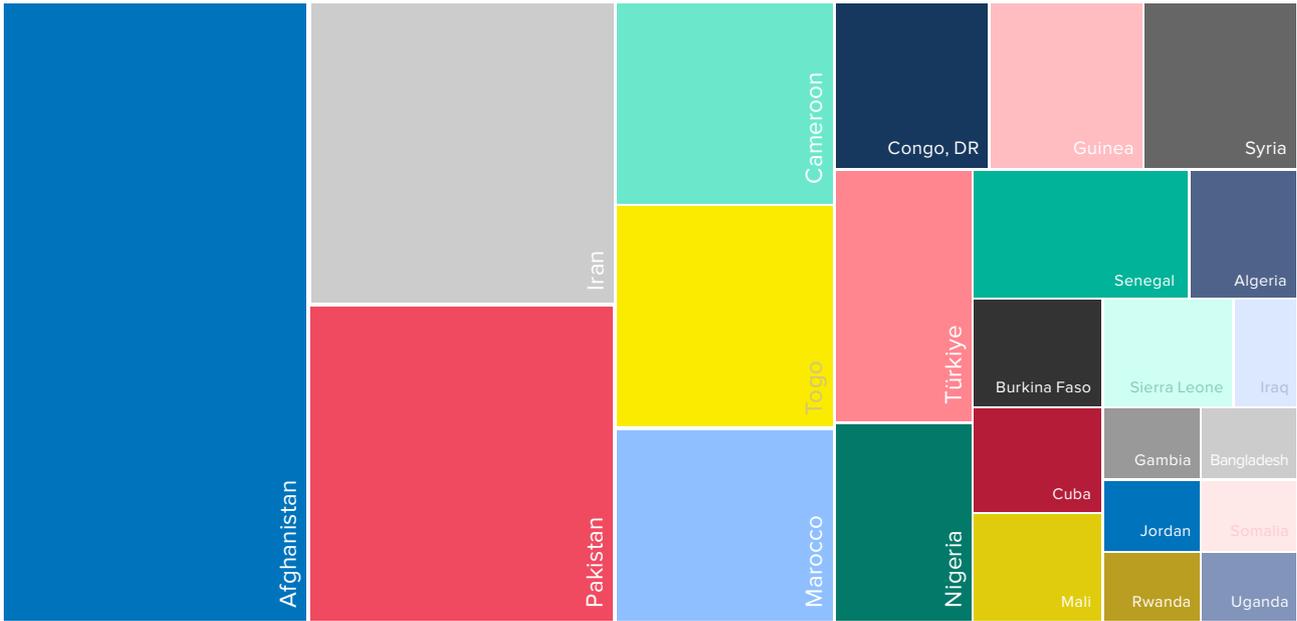
UNHCR consulted persons from 24 countries, reflecting the diversity of the asylum-seeking and refugee population in BiH. It was important to consult persons from as many different cultural backgrounds as possible to understand how their needs might differ from other groups and to ensure all voices are represented in UNHCR's programming and activities.

While the majority of persons of concern to UNHCR in the country are single men, UNHCR designed the Participatory Assessment to ensure the inclusion of women and children.

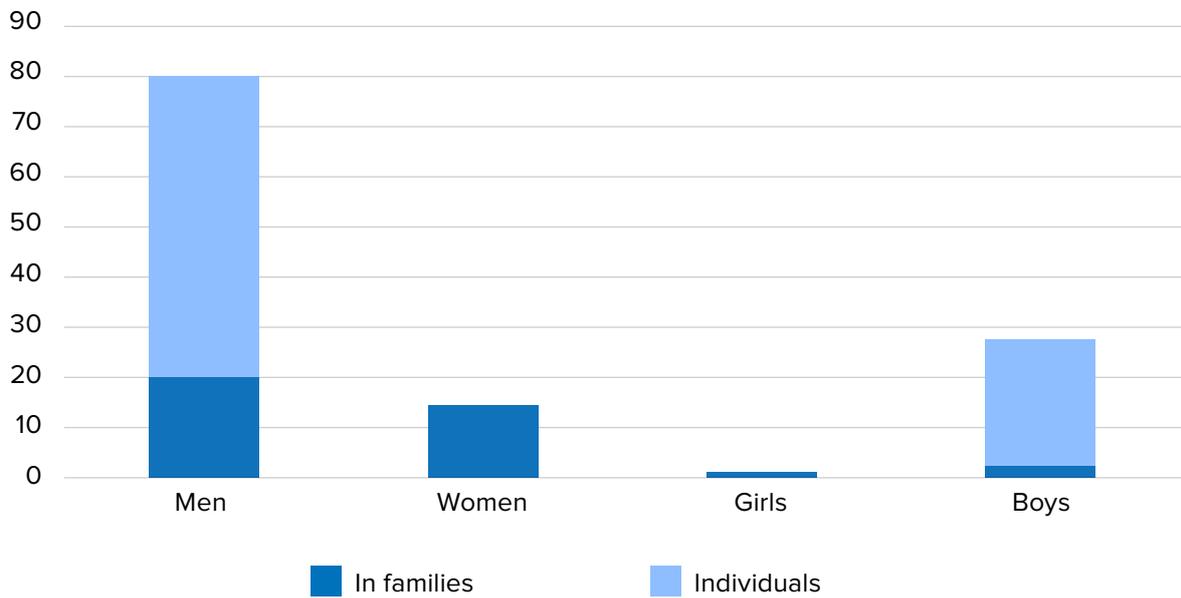


Focus group discussion on asylum procedure in TRC Lipa  
© UNHCR Bosnia and Herzegovina/Vaša Prava

## Breakdown by Country of Origin



## Age & Gender



## Time, place and format of the FGDs

The semi-structured interviews with the focus groups were conducted in UNHCR's three areas of activity, i.e. Sarajevo, Tuzla and Una-Sana Cantons, based on the composition of the populations of concern. The breakdown of the FGDs was as follows:

### Una-Sana Canton

Date	Location	Target population	#Of participants	Structure
8/2/2022	TRC Borići	Adult female asylum-seekers	5	Semi-structured FGD
8/2/2022	TRC Borići	Adult male asylum-seekers	4	Semi-structured FGD
8/2/2022	TRC Miral	UASC asylum-seekers (Boys)	9	Semi-structured FGD
8/2/2022	TRC Miral	Asylum-seekers from Sub-Saharan Africa (Male)	6	Semi-structured FGD
8/2/2022	TRC Miral	Adult male asylum-seekers	4	Semi-structured FGD
10/2/2022	TRC Lipa	UASC asylum-seekers (Boys)	8	Semi-structured FGD
10/2/2022	TRC Lipa	Adult male asylum-seekers	2	Semi-structured FGD
8-10/2/2022	Private accommodation and Safe House	Asylum-seekers and beneficiaries of international protection	14	Individual semi-structured interviews

### Sarajevo Canton

Date	Location	Target population	#Of participants	Structure
9/2/2022	UNHCR	Beneficiaries of international protection in private accommodation	5	Semi-structured FGD
9/2/2022	UNHCR	Asylum-seekers in private accommodation	7	Semi-structured FGD
9/2/2022	PPC Ušivak	Asylum-seekers -UASC (Boys)	5	Semi-structured FGD

9/2/2022	PPC Ušivak	Asylum-seekers- from Sub-Saharan Africa (families)	5	Semi-structured FGD
10/2/2022	PPC Blažuj	Asylum-seekers (Male)	5	Semi-structured FGD
10/2/2022	PPC Blažuj	Asylum-seekers from Sub-Saharan Africa (Male)	19	Semi-structured FGD
2-10/2/2022	various	LGBTIQ+ asylum-seekers	10	Individual semi-structured interviews
23/3/2022	PPC Blažuj	Asylum-seekers from Sub-Saharan Africa (Male)	11	Semi-structured FGD

## Tuzla Canton

Date	Location	Target population	#Of participants	Structure
8-10/2/2022	Private and NGO accommodation	Asylum-seekers	10	Individual semi-structured interviews





# Assessment findings

**Persons under Subsidiary Protection overwhelmingly shared that their status came with major limitations**, including lack of travel documentation and right to family reunification, as well as permanent residence which would eventually lead to the possibility to apply for naturalization. For this reason, many also questioned whether they would remain in BiH long term.

Also, the authorities maintain a restrictive approach to assessing asylum claims, granting refugee status in a very limited number of cases. They instead grant subsidiary protection in cases when refugee status would likely be more appropriate – such as cases involving Afghan, Syrian and Turkish citizens. **Persons under Subsidiary Protection complained about their dilemma on whether to appeal such decisions as an appeal would delay their access to rights based on granted status.** As a matter of fact, they keep their asylum-seeker status during the entire appeal procedure.

**Asylum-seekers and refugees reported that most institutions did not recognize their documents** (asylum-seeker cards or proof of status) which prevented them from opening bank accounts, registering with employment bureaus and getting a job.

**The length of the asylum procedure is the biggest deterrent for many to apply for asylum or consider BiH a durable solution.** All surveyed overwhelmingly communicated that the biggest concern was the BiH asylum procedure length, efficiency and quality. Those who applied complained that the lengthy procedure prevented them from accessing their rights and beginning the integration process. Many wanted to work, study and become self-sufficient, yet could not while their application was pending. For those with international protection needs, or other specific needs, who chose not to pursue with asylum claim registration, the length and quality of the decisions were largely the reasons, with many believing that they would have better prospects in Western European countries. Many acknowledged that BiH could offer safety and opportunity, and sighted the hospitality of the population and sizable Muslim population, but the length of the procedure ultimately motivates them to move onward.



*BiH gave me status of subsidiary protection and I started working recently. This is nice but, with this status I feel imprisoned in BiH. I do not have any travel documents and I cannot reunite with my family. I feel that I deserve refugee status.*

*Syrian national who has subsidiary protection in BiH*



**Most people lacked information about asylum, UNHCR, partners, or their legal status in BiH.** For those who had not formally applied, many believed they had applied, as they were confusing the AISA (issued by the Service for Foreigners' Affairs (SFA) upon arrival in the territory, including in the TRCs) with an effective asylum application registered with the Sector for Asylum of the Ministry of Security. Many also reported that they did not know that asylum was possible in BiH even though they received an AISA, having heard contrary information from their communities and smugglers.

**Many asylum-seekers and refugees expressed concerns about security in the TRCs** and noted impunity or lack of police response for perpetrators of crimes. While security concerns were raised by all demographic groups, those from ethnic minority groups and the LGBTQI+ community experienced incidents at a higher rate. They noted that even



Info session on asylum procedure in Safe house Puž, Tuzla  
 © UNHCR Bosnia and Herzegovina/Vaša Prava

when incidents were reported to the authorities, perpetrators would often be returned to the TRCs with little consequence.

**LGBTQI+ refugees and asylum-seekers are at heightened risk of violence and exploitation.**

Nearly all of the participants who identify as LGBTQI+ reported experiencing some form of violence, generally motivated by their sexual



*I wish to learn the local language, so that I could find a job as a tailor.*

*Asylum-seeker from Afghanistan*



*If I do not get asylum in BiH, I will go for game. I cannot go back to my country because it is too dangerous for me.*

*Refugee from Syria*



orientation or gender identity, either within BiH or elsewhere on the journey. While the perpetrators were most commonly other asylum-seekers or migrants, some reported violence from border police and persons employed by humanitarian agencies.



Pride March banners prepared jointly by LGBTQI+ refugees and asylum-seekers and local community members during a workshop in Sarajevo, © UNHCR Bosnia and Herzegovina

None of those who reported experiencing violence felt safe approaching the police, some because the perpetrators were in positions of authority and others because of the dual discrimination they face as forcibly displaced and LGBTQI+ persons. All indicated that they are forced to conceal their diverse sexual orientations and gender identities for fear of violence, with those living in all-male TRCs describing security as their paramount concern. Many expressed concerns about reporting violence or seeking support specifically in relation to their diverse sexual orientations and gender identities as it would “out” them to the general population and place them at greater risk. Almost all reported having no family nor community support, placing them in a particularly vulnerable situation, with some resorting to transactional sex as a means of survival.



*I am not telling anyone in the camp that I'm gay. I am afraid that others will find out and will attack me. I believe I can start my life in BiH, but not here in the centre.*

*LGBTQI+ asylum-seeker*



*I would like to meet local gay people to make friends.*

*LGBTQI+ asylum-seeker*



**LGBTQI+ refugees and asylum-seekers face specific challenges and require tailored support.**

Many of those interviewed experienced prolonged periods of housing insecurity and homelessness due to a lack of dedicated safe accommodation for LGBTQI+ persons. Due to the trauma and stigmatization experienced in the country of origin, along the journey, and within BiH, many struggled with substance abuse as a coping mechanism, which contributed to their chronic housing insecurity. For those who sought psychological support, many reported feeling discriminated or a lack of understanding of their unique experiences either by the psychologists or interpreters. Interpretation was



Focus group discussion in TRC Borići  
© UNHCR Bosnia and Herzegovina/Vaša Prava

another major issue identified as many did not feel comfortable with interpreters from their country of origin, who were often asylum-seekers themselves or migrants. Many experienced that interpreters carried with them cultural prejudices and stigmas, and feared being outed by them to the refugee and migrant population or communities back home. They also expressed desire to interact more with local LGBTQI+ community and to have more access to specific services.

**Registration authorities do not recognize gender identity and sexual orientation as a specific need and/or fail to appropriately register unconventional family structures.** Many reported being turned away from family centres (generally perceived to be safer) as the registration officials considered that they could be accommodated in all-male centres, regardless of their diverse sexual orientation and gender identities. One individual reported pretending to be with another family to gain admittance but upon discovery, the person was sent to the all-male center where he faced harassment and intimidation. In many cases, vulnerable individuals were accommodated in all-male centers and were moved elsewhere only after repeated harassment and violence. Same-sex couples reported being registered independently and issued separate attestations due to a lack of recognition of their relationship, which has repercussions on their accommodation and asylum procedures.



*Someone asked me why I applied for asylum here in this country and he said I will never get it. I came a long way and I survived. Now I am waiting for long time for my asylum status. I have to be patient. If God protected me all this time, I believe he will now.*

*Asylum-seeker from Iraq*





Focus/peer to peer session with UASC in TRC Boríci about asylum procedure in BiH  
 © UNHCR Bosnia and Herzegovina/Vaša Prava

**Persons of concern to UNHCR from Sub-Saharan Africa reported experiencing discrimination and violence at a higher rate than other populations.**

They described facing discrimination from the authorities and general population, including denial of access to public transportation, restaurants and shops. They also described targeted harassment and violence in TRCs, particularly in Blažuj, where they represent a minority population. Many described theft and violence as a daily occurrence, particularly at night when security is reduced and most actors are not present.

**Many persons from Sub-Saharan Africa may need international protection but are unwilling to pursue it in BiH.**

For most of participants from this group, BiH is a transit country, thus the fact that the majority does not wish to remain is not atypical. What is particular is that within this diverse population, many may have refugee profiles but lack information about the asylum procedure or durable solutions in BiH. As a result of their experiences of discrimination, many stick closely within their communities, and thus these communities and smugglers are the only source of information available. Following the FGDs, many were surprised to learn about the possibilities to remain in BiH and were referred for additional legal counselling.



*Bosnia and Herzegovina is a country where life worthy of a human being is possible to build and that is the most important for my family and myself.*

*Asylum-seeker from Iran*



**UASC face huge pressure from families and communities to continue onward to Western European countries,**

despite the fact that many would opt to remain in BiH due to the safety and opportunities they perceive the country offers. UASC also rely heavily on their legal guardians for all information and services, although some participants

in the exercise informed that guardians are typically passive and do not proactively engage with children about options, including asylum. UASC were largely unaware about the formal complaint mechanisms available. They instead channeled feedback through their guardians, which potentially creates conflict due to the lack of anonymity or capacity to respond.

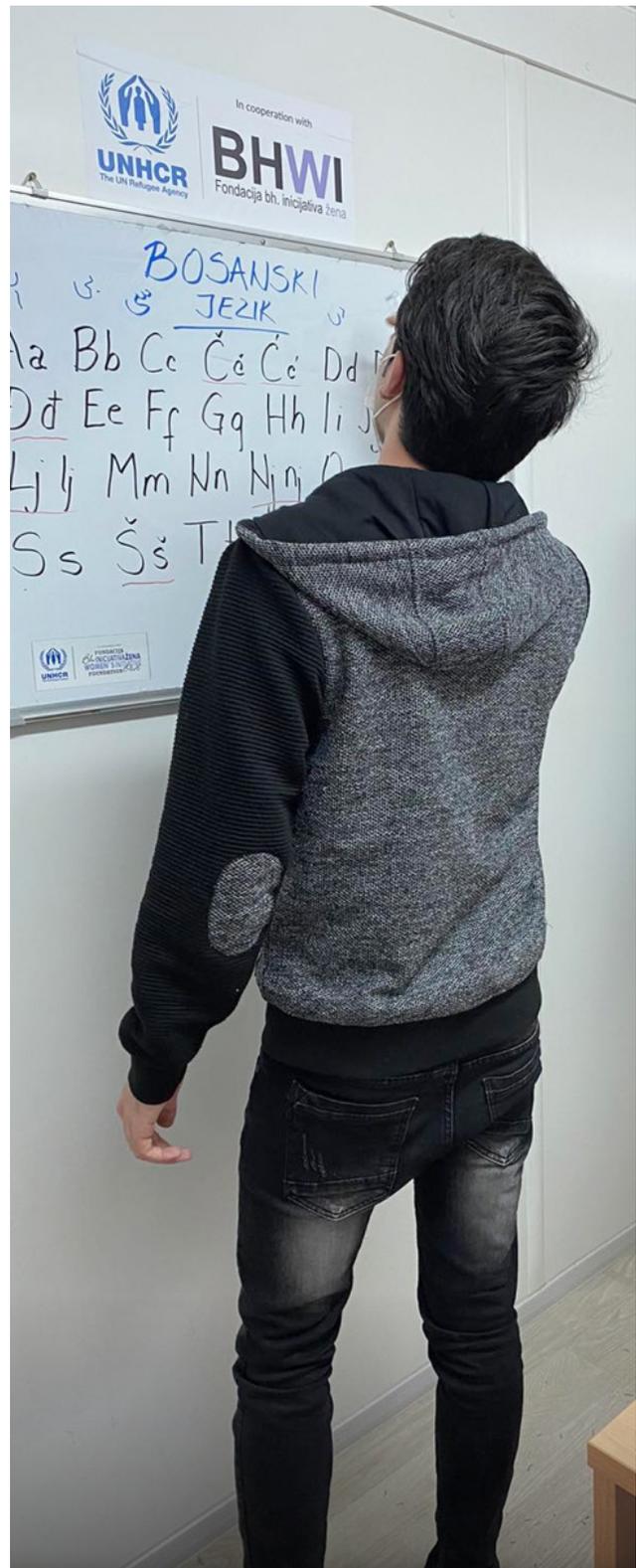
**Participants preferred face-to-face communication as a means of receiving information.** Most lacked reliable internet access or smartphones. While some also communicated via messaging apps, face-to-face communication was always the preference. Many persons reported having seen UNHCR's info materials in the TRCs, but few paid attention or sought further information.

**Many asylum-seekers expressed an interest in learning local language, but few were actively participating in courses.** Most acknowledged the importance of learning the language for employment and integration yet were not aware of language learning opportunities.

**Very few asylum-seekers and persons under international protection initially intended to remain in Bosnia and Herzegovina but changed their minds after repeated failed attempts to move onward** or facing other difficulties. Many had little information about asylum and integration possibilities in BiH when they arrived, but ultimately decided to remain upon observing the potential the country offered.

**For asylum-seekers and persons under international protection, there was a perception that UNHCR could do more to facilitate employment.** Across the board, participants expressed a desire to work and become self-sufficient and many were interested in any financial support that might be available to bridge the gap until they obtain self-sufficiency. For those with status, few reported being financially self-sufficient.

**For those outside TRCs, access to information and services was severely limited.** Therefore, most relied on communities for information and did not know where to go for support regarding specific needs including documentation, legal processes, psychosocial support, etc.



TRC Ušivak resident attending Bosnian language class organized by BHW in the Center, Feb 2022

© UNHCR Bosnia and Herzegovina/Vaša Prava



# Recommendations

The recommendations below are addressed to UNHCR, authorities and other relevant actors. They have already been considered by UNHCR in its planning and programming with specific activities developed in line with the recommendations. They also include advocacy points which UNHCR is advancing with the relevant authorities in BiH.



*Home is where I can  
imagine my future and  
that is here, in Bosnia and  
Herzegovina.*

*Iranian asylum-seeker who  
resides in TRC Borići*



## Asylum Procedure

**Further reduce the overall length of the procedure and prioritize cases of vulnerable individuals and persons with a genuine interest to seek asylum in BiH.** Ensure UNHCR advocacy efforts are closely coordinated with other stakeholders, including the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) (former European Asylum Support Office (EASO)), the European Union Delegation in BiH and other stakeholders. Advocate for the ability of asylum-seekers to be registered without awaiting a formal invitation and continue to advocate for the re-issuance of attestations where appropriate.

**Improve the quality of asylum decisions,** with UNHCR's support jointly with other concerned actors, including for the recognition of refugee status when more appropriate than granting subsidiary protection. It is indeed problematic to grant subsidiary protection to someone who likely fits the definition of a refugee as it does not provide him or her access to family reunification, travel

documentation and a path to naturalization. Enhance capacity-building with the judiciary to ensure it fully embraces its role as the second-instance body in the asylum procedure and is empowered to issue decisions on the merits of an asylum claim.

### **Communication with Communities including information sharing on asylum procedure**

**Maintain a regular presence of UNHCR and its partners in TRCs as well as in outreach locations to ensure the provision of quality information on the asylum procedure and solutions in BiH.** Enhance the role of cultural mediators to facilitate a proactive approach to information provision, including presence at registration points and community council meetings. Target community leaders as multipliers to counter misinformation circulated by smugglers and within communities.

**Coordinate with SFA and IOM to establish regular information sessions and focus group discussions with those newly arrived in TRCs. In cooperation with the Centers for Social Welfare (CSW), include specific sessions for UASC.** Consider establishing an orientation session for those newly arrived on the services provided in each TRC and the role of all actors present. Explore the possibility of handing out leaflets during the registration process with basic information on asylum and contact details of UNHCR and its partners.

Develop a **training module for the authorities on respect for diversity** and specific sessions on new profiles/countries of origin.

**Expand UNHCR's outreach to communities through the piloting of innovative modalities of communication,** including social media and messaging services. Seek to tap into existing communication networks rather than establishing parallel systems to ensure maximum efficiency and empower cultural mediators to serve as moderators and providers of information.

**Further enhance UNHCR's visibility and information materials throughout TRCs and locations where asylum-seekers and refugees congregate.** In parallel, continue to conduct face-to-face information sessions on asylum and ensure information materials are developed to be accessible to persons with specific needs, including vulnerable women, persons with reduced literacy and children.

**Enhance coordination with the Centers for Social Welfare (CSW) and legal guardians to ensure**

they have accurate information on the asylum procedure and how to refer cases interested or likely in need of international protection. Establish closer coordination between cultural mediators and guardians to ensure all UASC have basic information on asylum opportunities in the country to empower them to make informed decisions. Work with child protection actors and CSW to ensure that legal guardians are fully capacitated to make best interest determinations for UASC under their care, including asylum and legal family reunification or other complementary pathways where available.

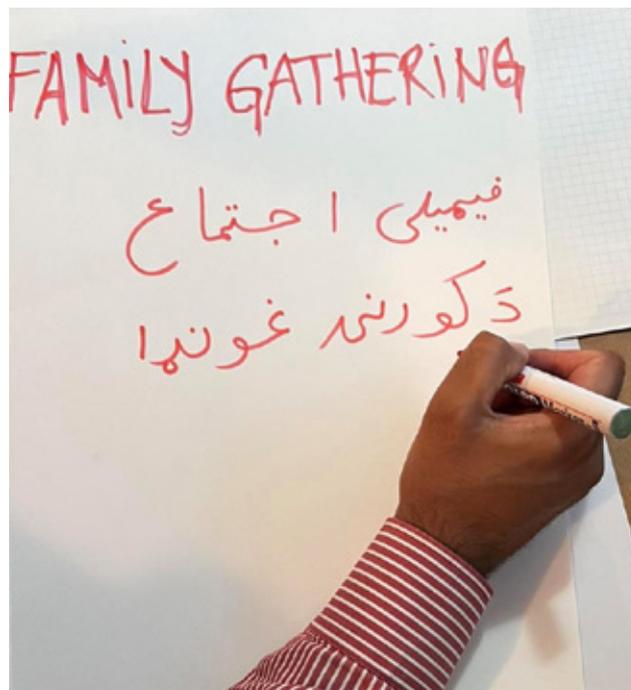
## Working with the LGBTQI+ community

Strengthen coordination with concerned actors and existing Safe Houses to **ensure safe and dignified accommodation for LGBTQI+ asylum-seekers and refugees.** In addition to Safe Houses, Asylum Center Delijaš should be further utilized to ensure access for LGBTQI+ persons and others with specific needs for whom mixed population in the TRCs may not be appropriate. In some cases, cash-based-interventions could be explored as an alternative to ensure that certain vulnerable populations are empowered to make housing decisions in their best interests.

Further **enhance the capacity of first-line registration authorities to identify specific needs, including needs related to diverse sexual orientation and gender identities,** and to ensure that they are channeled for appropriate follow-up and services, particularly safe and dignified housing. In line with the Government's [2021-2024 Action Plan for the Promotion of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of LGBTI People in Bosnia and Herzegovina](#), assist the authorities to identify and register persons with diverse sexual orientation and gender identities and unconventional family compositions, including transgender individuals and persons in same sex partnerships.

In coordination with relevant actors, including the EUAA, **further capacitate the authorities to properly examine asylum claims from LGBTQI+ persons in a dignified and non-invasive manner.**

**Conduct trainings for interpreters and cultural mediators from all actors working with the refugee and migrant population to further sensitize them to work with LGBTQI+ individuals and ensure service provision is conducted in a dignified and respectful manner.**



Workshop organized in Sarajevo for LGBTQI+ refugees and asylum-seekers and local community to jointly prepare messages and banners for Pride March  
© UNHCR Bosnia and Herzegovina

**Strengthen partnerships with LGBTQI+ civil society organizations to ensure protection mainstreaming and establish referral pathways for persons with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities for specialized resources.** Close coordination with civil society should also aim to facilitate integration of LGBTQI+ refugees and asylum-seekers.



*I don't feel comfortable talking about being gay in front of the interpreter because he is from my country, and he will not understand my situation.*

*LGBTQI+ asylum-seeker*





Beneficiary attending handmade jewellery workshop organized in AC Delijaš, March 2022  
 © UNHCR Bosnia and Herzegovina/BHWI

## Feedback and Response Mechanisms

Work with IOM, SFA and all actors in TRCs to **guarantee that clear information on Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse is available and that complaint and feedback mechanisms are widely disseminated amongst communities.** Ensure UNHCR and partners clearly communicate with persons of



*I traveled alone for 3 years.  
 It is dangerous. I am tired.  
 My parents are back in  
 Pakistan and I haven't  
 talked with them in long  
 time. In BiH it is safe.  
 Unaccompanied minor from  
 Pakistan*



concern about the tools at disposal for confidentially reporting any misconduct. Continue advocating for the establishment of a feedback mechanism in Asylum Center Delijaš. Ensure all persons of concern are aware of how to get in contact with UNHCR.

**Enhance outreach to asylum-seekers and persons under international protection in private accommodation to ensure regular feedback on their specific needs.** Seek to identify community leaders to serve as interlocutors between communities and UNHCR, and support the establishment of refugee-led organizations where feasible.

## Security

**Coordinate with IOM and SFA to ensure an enhanced police presence in TRCs** and guarantee that perpetrators of crimes or those who violate center rules are not allowed to return to the centers. Engage with communities in the centers to understand their specific security concerns and develop joint action plans to address them.



Refugees from Ukraine proudly showing Bosnian language course certificates  
 © UNHCR Bosnia and Herzegovina/BHWI

## Local Integration

**International actors should further empower the authorities to take ownership of the integration process for those granted international protection** in close coordination with relevant partners to ensure a smooth transition for asylum-seekers once a decision is issued. State-led case management should ensure a comprehensive action plan for refugees and persons under subsidiary protection to facilitate access to employment, language and vocational training, housing, health care, financial assistance and all other rights and benefits attached to their status. Advocate with the authorities for the creation of additional positions in the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees (MHRR) and ensure that sufficient budget is allocated for the provision of MHRR's services. Support MHRR in ensuring inclusion of vulnerable persons granted international protection in the existing social protection schemes available for the local population.

**Strengthen the provision of local language courses to all asylum-seekers and refugees.** While advocating with the authorities for the establishment



*My plan was only to pass through Bosnia and Herzegovina, not to stay. I didn't even know it was possible to seek asylum here. It is a Muslim country (predominantly) and I feel comfortable here. People are nice.*

*Asylum-seeker from Afghanistan*



of a systematic local language learning scheme, consider partnering with private language courses providers to ensure access for all persons, including those residing outside of TRCs. Ensure that language training begins well before issuance of a decision on an individual's asylum claim to facilitate a smoother integration process once a positive decision is received. Ensure that delivery of language courses is flexible, both in terms of schedule and modality (in person and online), to guarantee participation of persons of concern with other obligations including work, education and childcare.

**Map labor gaps and establish partnerships with Centers for Employment, employers and vocational training programmes to facilitate access to the labor market** for asylum-seekers and persons granted international protection. Advocate with state actors and employers to facilitate the recognition of foreign education and vocational credentials and understand domestically issued documents, including asylum-seeker cards, refugee and subsidiary protection cards, and their corresponding rights.

**Establish cooperation with local banks to guarantee persons of concern can open accounts without hindrance** to facilitate employment, receipt of limited financial allowance and cash-based assistance.

**Further advocate for changes to the legal framework which ensures persons under subsidiary protection have guaranteed rights** which enhance their ability to achieve durable solutions in BiH, including issuance of travel documents, the right to family reunification and a pathway to naturalization.

## Refugees from Ukraine



**Activate the Temporary Protection Decision which is more appropriate for persons fleeing Ukraine and expand its scope to non-nationals fleeing Ukraine in need of international protection.** The BiH Law on Asylum offers the possibility to grant Temporary Protection which would, besides offering legal residence, provide quick access to legal status and rights, including health, education and work.

**Continue to use the UNHCR-led Protection Sector Working Group as a coordination structure to exchange information and coordinate assistance to persons fleeing Ukraine to avoid duplication.**



# Annexes

## Standard definitions of AGDM Protection Risks and Causes

### 1. Inadequate housing and unhygienic living conditions

- Inadequate housing and unhygienic living conditions, including inadequate shelter, poor facilities, limited access to utilities and services, remote location of accommodation facilities and lack of alternatives.

**2. Lack of access to Education** - Lack of access to education, defined as social, material or administrative obstacles to the enjoyment of primary, secondary and tertiary education.

**3. Lack of access to documentation** - Lack of access to documentation, defined as a full or partial lack of civil documentation, including problems related to civil registration and registration at birth and administrative barriers to obtaining documents.

**4. Health risks** - Health risks, defined as threats to the physical health and well-being of the person, including those caused by social and administrative factors such as poor living conditions or limited access to services and medical supplies.

**5. Lack of job and income** - generating opportunities due to legal status - Lack of job and income-generating opportunities, defined as difficulties or limitations accessing the labor market, or engaging in income generation activities (if legally eligible).

**6. Material hardship** - Material hardship, defined as difficulties in acquiring basic personal and household goods, such as clothing, furniture, and hygienic products, as well as difficulties accessing supplementary food items.

**7. Psychological concerns** - Psychological concerns, defined as mental illness and disorders, or problems related to feelings of depression, isolation, exclusion, and hopelessness.

**8. Social exclusion** - Social exclusion, defined as difficulties organizing social and community life, including remoteness or separation from the local community, lack of recreational and community facilities and activities.

**9. Lack of information regarding rights, obligations and entitlements** - Lack of information regarding rights, obligations and entitlements, defined as lack of information about rights in place of current stay in a language they understand, lack of knowledge regarding own status, lack of access to legal assistance and information sources, asylum procedure. This also includes a lack of information presented in a child-friendly way.

**10. Missing documents.**

**11. Lack of access to a fair, efficient administrative or judicial procedure** - Lack of access to administrative or judicial procedure, defined as an inability to access justice due to the lack of documents, language barrier or other reasons.

**12. Asylum Procedure** - Lack of access to a fair, efficient and/or effective asylum, defined as an inability to access a right to unfair or unreasonably long or cumbersome procedure, or inability of the responsible body to make a decision that would guarantee the right, or the absence of an appeal right.

**13. Lack of physical security in government-run centre** - Lack of physical security in the government facilities, defined as threats or incidents due to inadequate design or location of facilities or inadequate response/unfair application of rules by Centre's management and competent authorities to instances of verbal, psychological and physical violence and antisocial behavior, including thefts.

**14. Physical abuse** - Physical abuse (the use of violent physical force so as to cause actual or likely physical injury or suffering).

**15. Emotional abuse** - Emotional abuse (the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development).

**16. Sexual abuse and sexual exploitation** - Sexual or gender-based violence (committing violence against a person based on his/her gender or sex. Including also forcing or enticing a person to take part in sexual activities whether or not the child is aware of what is happening, as well as other types of violence physical, emotional, psychological, etc.

**17. Trafficking** - the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation.

**18. Exploitation** - Exploitation (pressuring, enticing, coercing, or compelling a child to perform acts or activities for someone else's advantage, gratification or profit often resulting in unjust, cruel and harmful maltreatment of children or adults); Exploitation can include prostitution or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.

**19. Neglect and negligent treatment (children)** - Neglect and negligent treatment (the persistent failure either deliberately or through careless negligence, to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs and is likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development).

**20. Violence** - Violence (the deliberate use of physical force or power or, the threat to use any form of aggression, against a child person that is committed by an individual or group and either results in or, has a high likelihood of resulting in, actual or potential harm to the child's survival, health, development or dignity).

**21. Lack of individualized approach for UASC** - Lack of individualized approach for UASC - Decisions regarding protection procedures and responses for children are based on an understanding of each child's individual circumstances and needs that is as accurate and complete as possible, do UASC have appointed guardian who is in contact with them regularly and with whom they talk about their needs, who advocate for their rights.

**22. Lack of participation** - Lack of participation (are people involved, informed and their opinion is asked and considered when decisions affecting their lives and living arrangements are made. Lack of participation, defined as lack of opportunities to express their views, including in a structured manner through refugee committees, the existence of women and youth committees.

**23. Lack of possibilities to fully develop capacities** - Lack of possibilities to fully develop capacities defined as the lack of opportunities to be actively

engaged in different child-friendly activities and education that build their skills and capacities.

**24. Discrimination** - Discrimination, defined as real or perceived discrimination or unfavorable treatment against the individual based on his or her sex, ethnicity or displaced status.

**25. Concern relating to sexual and reproductive health and safe motherhood** - Concerns relating to sexual and reproductive health and safe motherhood, defined as lack of access to information and services which promote sexual and reproductive health and safe motherhood.

**26. Lack of information on missing persons** - Lack of information on missing persons, defined as difficulties accessing information on the situation of missing persons.

**27. Lack of assistance to the disabled** - Lack of assistance to the disabled, defined as difficulties accessing social services, benefits and medical supplies of persons with physical and mental disabilities.

**28. Lack of assistance to older persons** - Lack of assistance to older persons, defined as physical and mental conditions encountering social perceptions and the interactions of an individual with his or her environment.

**29. No protection risks.**

**30. Other.**

**Cause of Protection Risks (May be multiple)**

- Individual
- Family
- Community
- Administrative
- External
- Unknown

# Questionnaires for each age group

## QUESTIONNAIRE

**Indicator 2.1 Proportion of persons of concern to UNHCR living below the national poverty line.**  
[GCR 2.1.1 and SDG 1.2.1].

**Population: RR + SP + AS**

**To be answered by HoH**

Are your expenditures more than 266km per month per person?

**Indicator: Proportion of persons of concern to UNHCR feeling safe walking alone in their neighbourhood (related SDG 16.1.4).**

**Population : AS + SP + RR**

Do you feel safe in your new environment/neighbourhood where you are living?

Answer (select only one)

- Very safe
- Fairly safe
- Bit unsafe
- Very unsafe
- I never walk alone/don't know

**Indicator: Proportion of persons of concern to UNHCR who self-report positive changes in their income compared to previous year.**

**Population : SP + RR**

**(Please only answer for household members who are 15+).**

When you compare now and a year ago, has your income increased, decreased or remained the same?

- Increase
- Decrease
- Remained the same

**Indicator: Proportion of persons of concern to UNHCR with secure tenure rights and/or property rights to housing and/or land [revised SDG indicator 1.4.2].**

**Population : SP + RR**

Do you have documents that demonstrate your right to live in this house and/or on this land?

Answer: Yes/No

**To sum up, these questions will have to be asked:**

Questions	Type of Population	Answer Options	Instruction
Are your household expenditures more than 260km per person per month?	RR + SP + AS	Yes/No	Please ask the participant(s) about their expenditures and not their income. In case of a family, ask the question only to the head of household. The 260km is the amount spent per person.
Do you feel safe in your new environment/ neighborhood where you are living?	RR + SP + AS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very safe</li> <li>• Fairly safe</li> <li>• Bit unsafe</li> <li>• Very unsafe</li> <li>• I never walk alone/ don't know</li> </ul>	Please indicate the possible answers and record the answer the participant agrees with most.
When you compare now and a year ago, has your income increased, decreased or remained the same?	RR + SP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase</li> <li>• Decrease</li> <li>• Remained the same</li> </ul>	Please indicate the possible answers and record the answer the participant agrees with most.
Do you have documents that demonstrate your right to live in this house and/or on this land?	RR + SP (only in private accommodation)	Yes/No	Please only pose this question to persons in private accommodation (not in TRCs). On some occasions, BHWI or another organization has a housing contract and not the asylum-seeker or the refugee himself or herself. It is also possible that only the man in the family signed the contract, which can be a risk for women.
In the next five years, how likely or unlikely is it that you could lose your right to this housing and/ or land, against your will?	RR + SP (only in private accommodation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very likely</li> <li>• Somewhat likely</li> <li>• Somewhat unlikely</li> <li>• Very unlikely</li> </ul>	Only ask this question if the person responded "yes" to the question before.



## **CONTACT:**

**UNHCR Bosnia and Herzegovina**

[bsnsa@unhcr.org](mailto:bsnsa@unhcr.org)

**Fra Anđela Zvizdovića 1, 71000 Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina**

[www.unhcr.org](http://www.unhcr.org) | [www.unhcr.org/see/where-we-work/bosnia-and-Herzegovina](http://www.unhcr.org/see/where-we-work/bosnia-and-Herzegovina)