

MIXED MOVEMENTS IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA: SITUATION UPDATE

January 2024

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MONTH

KEY FIGURES

2,953

irregular arrivals recorded during the reporting month

2,953

total arrivals in 2024

2,592

persons accommodated in official reception facilities (as of 4 February 2024)

5%

children in families

10%

unaccompanied children

2%

single adult females

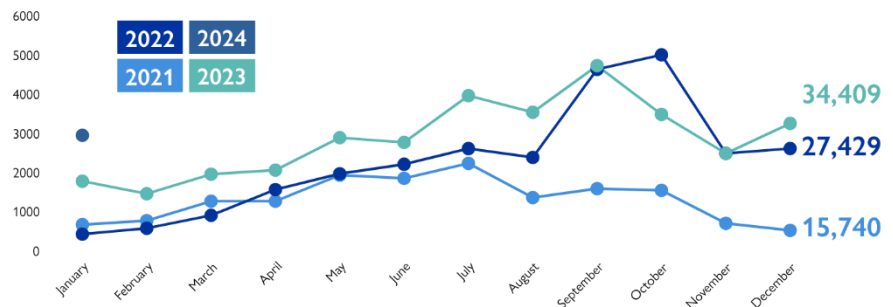
Main nationalities

47% Syrian Arab Republic

15% Afghanistan

12% Morocco

In January 2024¹, authorities recorded 2,953 irregular arrivals in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), which is a decrease of nine per cent compared to the preceding month (3,257). The majority of new arrivals declared to originate from the Syrian Arab Republic (47%), Afghanistan (15%), and Morocco (12%). 85 per cent (2,516) of them were issued an “Attestation on Intention to Seek Asylum” (AISA). In 2024 so far, BiH authorities have registered 2,953 irregular arrivals in BiH, which is 66 per cent more compared to the same period in 2023.



As of the last day of the reporting period, 2,592 migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees are accommodated in Temporary Reception Centres (TRCs) and other private and NGO-led shelters in BiH. This represents a decrease of two per cent compared to the last day of the previous reporting period (2,638). The map below depicts the distribution of beneficiaries in BiH as of 4 February 2024.



¹ Reporting period: from 1 January to 4 February 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:

- **In January, as in previous months, Syrian nationals remained the largest nationality group** among mixed movements, followed by Afghan and Moroccan nationals. Syrians have been arriving in large numbers in BiH since late November 2023. Authorities in BiH registered the arrival of 3,069 Syrian nationals in December 2023 and January 2024, compared to 812 in all of January to November 2023.
- According to interviews conducted with 872 migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees, in January, **the average length of stay in BiH was 21 days**, which is similar to December 2023 and a reflection of the fact that migrants are less mobile in the winter months. Fewer people on the move were observed in transit locations outside of reception centers.
- In January, **the Sector for Asylum of the Ministry of Security registered the asylum claims of 30 persons** (18 cases) and conducted three Refugee Status Determination interviews (three cases). During the month, six persons (four cases) were granted subsidiary protection. Two applications were otherwise closed. As of 31 January, 125 asylum-seekers (88 cases) were awaiting processing of their claims and final decisions on their applications in BiH.
- **Recent contextual developments contributed to an increase in asylum applications in BiH**, with 30 asylum claims registered in January. This can be explained to some extent by the surge in the number of arrivals of Syrian nationals to BiH in the last months, as well as by evacuations of BiH citizens and their Palestinian relatives from Gaza to BiH. This increase also hints at an improved provision of information to persons on the move, and better identification and prioritization of persons in need of international protection.

INTERAGENCY COORDINATION:

- **UN agencies active in BiH have formed the Interagency Network for the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)**, with the aim of developing a joint mechanism dedicated to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse cases. **The first PSEA Interagency Network meetings with partners were organized in all TRCs**. During the meetings, all the activities foreseen by the Country-Level Action Plan to Prevent and Respond to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse were presented. The Country-Level Action Plan outlines the priorities agreed by UN Country Team members to achieve jointly across countries with humanitarian, development and peace and security operations. The objective is to promote, and document harmonized activities that contribute to implementing a robust action plan and provide the basis for tracking progress and provision of required resources in related to PSEA in countries with United Nations presence.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AVAILABLE

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



771

Number of services provided by the IOM Mobile Team

5,145

Number of new assisted beneficiaries in TRCs

4,672

Number of emergency vulnerability screenings in TRCs

1,018

Number of persons identified with protection risks and needs

153,830

Number of meals distributed

41,914

Number of non-food items distributed

In January, IOM continued to work with its partners to provide essential services to all people on the move in need. With close to 5,000 beds available across four TRCs in BiH, shelter and assistance have been provided to those in need of accommodation. In addition, concrete actions have been taken in line with winterization procedures, such as the distribution of Non-Food Items (NFIs) and clothing for the winter, infrastructure maintenance, and the installation of new or additional heating systems in all TRCs.

As a step forward in the transportation service transition in TRC Lipa, IOM handed over two vans to the SFA and organized five training sessions focused on procedural and practical knowledge. During the practical part of the training, SFA participants learned about necessary steps to take before and after the transportation of beneficiaries. IOM shared lessons learnt related to situations and risks that can occur before, during and after transportation. In addition, IOM and the SFA developed Standard Operating Procedures for Food, Non-Food Items (NFI), Shelter, and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) services. The next step will include a practical application and the development of new operational plans for all four services.

IOM organized Community Participation Meetings in TRCs, with the aim of ensuring that the services align closely with the needs of beneficiaries residing in the centres. In TRC Ušivak, 12 beneficiaries from the Syrian Arab Republic, Iran, and Türkiye, participated and provided feedback concerning Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) services. Participants reached consensus to collaboratively increase efforts in raising awareness of house rules and ensure good hygiene conditions in the WASH facilities.

UNHCR



UNHCR and its legal partner Vaša prava BiH organized 31 information sessions, both in individual and group settings, on the asylum procedure and international protection in BiH. Some sessions in Temporary Reception Centres (TRCs) were organized jointly with IOM. Majority of the 380 persons benefitting from these information sessions originated from the Syrian Arab Republic, Afghanistan and Morocco.

An increased interest in the asylum procedure in BiH was noticed in January. The number of cases presented to the UNHCR/Vaša prava BiH Eligibility Committee rose in December and January, and so did the number of applicants represented by Vaša prava BiH. The number of registrations of asylum claims (30) also went up. In addition, UNHCR's partner the Bosnia and Herzegovina Women's Initiative (BHWI) contributed by facilitating registration interviews of residents of TRCs Blažuj and Ušivak with transportation and social mentoring support.

With the start of the new school semester, UNHCR and its partners intensified their support for the inclusion of forcibly displaced children in the regular education system in BiH. For example, 10 Ukrainian refugee children started a new chapter of their lives, enrolling in local schools in the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton. This is a good example of successful cooperation with public institutions, particularly the schools and the Cantonal Ministry of Education. In January, UNHCR and BHWI visited one of the cooperating schools, where children were wholeheartedly embraced by the teachers, instructors, and their classmates. The integration of these children has been significant not only in providing access to education, but also when it comes to their integration into the local community. The process has allowed them to acquire new skills, adopt the local language and culture, and forge friendships with their peers, contributing to their psychosocial adaptation.

380

persons provided with information related to asylum in BiH

122

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

202

persons assisted with psychosocial support

75

social, recreational and occupational therapy sessions organized



UNICEF



In partnership with Fenix in TRC Borići and World Vision in TRC Ušivak, 72 children (38 girls and 34 boys) and 77 parents, out of which three pregnant women, were reached with **infant and young child feeding (IYCF) services**. In January, pediatric nurses organized activities and workshops with the aim of empowering parents to connect with children, to build healthy habits and support development of children.

343 children (40 girls and 303 boys of which 183 UASC) were reached with non-formal education, including foreign and local language learning, support in learning and catch-up classes within reception centers and schools. Teachers have utilized the Akelius Digital Language course through a blended teaching method. 293 children (32 girls) in TRCs Borići and Ušivak attended the Akelius Digital Language course.

UNICEF/WV Child protection and legal guardian teams provided **support with registration, accommodation and access to services for 939 unaccompanied and separated children** in both TRCs ensuring 24/7 monitoring and support. The team also implemented 161 activities for children in TRCs including educational, creative and sport activities. 337 children were provided with mental health and psychosocial support in both TRCs.

In January, UNICEF facilitated and led the monthly **Child Protection Working Group (CPWG)** at the Una-Sana and Sarajevo cantonal level as part of the child protection coordination.

UNICEF BiH in coordination with UNICEF Croatia organized the **visit of representatives of the Croatian Institute for Social Welfare and Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Policy** to Bihac. The visit was organized with the aim of gaining insights into migration and refugee policies, protection practices and identifying best practices in both countries.

Throughout the reporting period **202 children (74 girls) benefited from activities in the Child Friendly Spaces** in both TRCs. CFS animators prepared educational and creative workshops, development-oriented activities and psychosocial workshops with the aim to provide a stimulating and safe environment for the children.

- 1372**
children on the move benefitting from 24/7 protection and care
- 459**
UASC benefitting from the appointment and support of a legal guardian
- 343**
Refugee and migrant children benefitting from structured non-formal education, language courses and vocational training
- 55**
Refugee and migrant children supported with integration into the formal education system
- 72**
Refugee and migrant children benefitting from Mother-baby corner activities



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UNFPA



Sexual Reproductive Health services for women and girls in Canton Sarajevo @UNFPA 2024

In January, UNFPA, in collaboration with the Service for Foreigners' Affairs (SFA) in TRC Lipa, **held a Green Zone Council Meeting** aimed at fostering greater engagement among vulnerable male residents. The meeting facilitated a deeper understanding of the needs of vulnerable young men, introduced participants to the house rules of the Green Zone, and provided information on empowerment initiatives, violence prevention activities, and access to services within the center.

Working alongside SFA and IOM, UNFPA strengthened the protection of vulnerable male residents, ensuring that 228 individuals benefited from protection-sensitive accommodation in the Green Zones. Given the higher number of single women identified as survivors of gender-based violence (GBV), UNFPA focused on enhancing safety measures and promoting mechanisms to preserve the dignity and respect of vulnerable women. Additional efforts were made to raise awareness among TRC residents to prevent and report GBV promptly.

UNFPA organized The Gender-Based Violence Working Group for Canton Sarajevo, involving 12 representatives from partner organizations. The group discussed latest trends, statistics, updates on GBV referral pathways, and challenges in providing respective services.

Given that January is marked as the "Month of the fight against cervical cancer" an **empowerment workshop was finalized with female residents to raise awareness about cervical cancer** and educate on prevention, making and distribution of symbolic ribbons to raise awareness of the importance of taking care of women's health and early diagnosis.

UNFPA improved the psychological health and well-being of women and girls through mental health and psychosocial support activities. Empowerment activities conducted by UNFPA complemented the MHPSS services, fostering self-worth and autonomy among women and girls through relaxation techniques, dance, physical activities, and skill development sessions. Moreover, male residents participated in various empowerment sessions based on the Boys on the Move methodology, promoting inclusivity and cultural preservation while engaging in discussions on topics ranging from harmonious living to global issues.

447

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

270

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

718

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

321

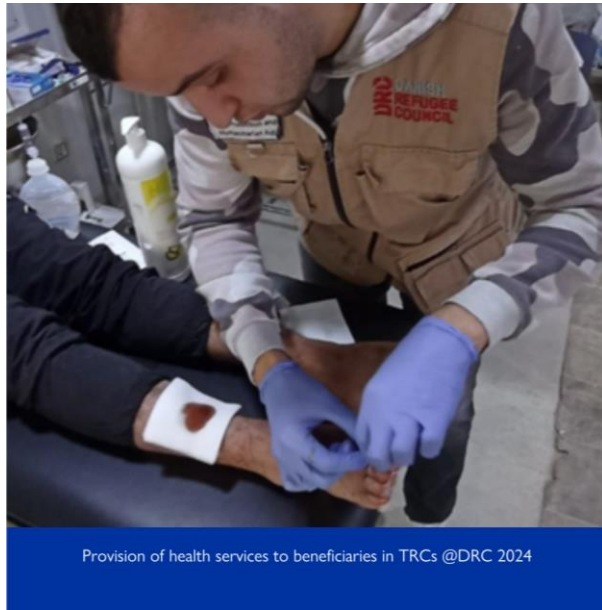
Number of empowerment services provided to female migrants, refugees and asylum seekers

301

Number of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers educated on GBV



DRC



Provision of health services to beneficiaries in TRCs @DRC 2024

1,503

Number of medical examinations

11,591

Number of medically attended by DRC staff

109

Number of referrals to Primary and Secondary Healthcare centers

2,239

Number referrals through protection activities in TRCs and outreach

217

Number of persons reporting pushbacks in the reporting period

During the reporting period, the TRCs experienced a higher number of beneficiaries, and **the daily DRC team conducted over 100 medical screenings for new arrivals**. Respiratory diseases surged among beneficiaries due to living conditions and lack of self-care, prompting the DRC to plan Health info sessions on winter protection and home treatment starting in February.

Throughout the reporting period, **DRC worked to address various health and security challenges**, emphasizing collaboration with stakeholders and implementing measures to ensure the well-being of beneficiaries in the TRCs.

Concerns about the **harm reduction program** were discussed in a meeting with MdM and their psychiatrist consultants. It was agreed to reduce the therapy caseload over four weeks due to its massive nature, and the program would cease after that period. The beneficiaries would undergo an "artificial detox," and their therapy would gradually reduce under the supervision of psychiatrists. The next weeks were deemed crucial, with prepared psychotropic medication to handle withdrawal symptoms.

DRC co-partner: Médecins du Monde (MDM)

Beneficiaries report usual symptomatology: having problems with sleep, nightmares, low mood, feelings of loneliness and isolation, lack of energy, and problems with concentration. Several beneficiaries have reported a trust issue, ruminations about the past, and the need to forget the past also continued to be expressed. Self-harm and aggressive behaviors were also reported several times this week.

MdM implemented an exit strategy due to the termination of activities on 12th of February. MdM psychologists started informing beneficiaries about the termination of activities and exiting and started the closure of Harm reduction Program as part of exit strategy.

Save the Children (SC)



67

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

212

potential UASC supported in Blažuj TRC and successfully referred to Ušivak TRC

464

information-sharing instances to children and adults outside of TRCs

198

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

88

children participated in the Education school program

In January, SC's response included support for 67 UASC outside reception centers in Tuzla, Sarajevo, and Una-Sana Canton. Notably, the winter did not deter the fluctuating arrival and transit of migrants and refugees, marking a slight uptick from the previous year, particularly among unaccompanied children.

SC's attentive child protection monitoring at the Blažuj reception center was instrumental in providing urgent support and identifying unaccompanied minors. A demographic shift included increased arrivals of male families from Syria and minors from Egypt. Strategic discussions with the Center for Social Welfare Ilidža were held to refine the assessment and engagement process for these families.

Coordination efforts by SC led to 198 potential UASC being transferred from Blažuj to Usivak and from various locations to the Borići reception center. This was achieved through a partnership with the Cantonal Center for Social Welfare Sarajevo and the Center for Social Welfare Velika Kladuša, ensuring access to comprehensive protection services and psychosocial support, including necessary transportation to reception centers.

Education remained a focus, with 88 children (55 boys, 33 girls) joining the preparatory school program; 59 were first-time enrollees, including 3 unaccompanied boys from Syria. The "winter school" initiative saw 22 children (14 boys, 8 girls), including one unaccompanied boy, engaging in diverse workshops and community activities, fostering peer integration.

Syria continues to be the predominant origin of new arrivals, with 52 children from Syrian families and UASC, followed by Iraq (4), Afghanistan (1), Somalia (1), and Yemen (1). In Sarajevo, the winter school benefited 12 children (7 boys, 5 girls). To underline the value of educational integration, SC organized regular information sessions for parents in TRCs, reinforcing the importance of education for their children's futures.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MONTH IN PICTURES



No Nation Fashion sewing workshop in TRC Ušivak @IOM 2024



Group social counselling session in TRC Blažuj @UNHCR/BHWI 2024



Child Friendly Space activity in TRC Ušivak ©UNICEF 2024



GBAwareness raising activities to mark "Month of the fight against cervical cancer" @UNFPA 2024



Provision of health services to beneficiaries @DRC 2024



Winter school creative workshop @SCI 2024



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