

# MIXED MOVEMENTS IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA: SITUATION UPDATE

## February 2024

### HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MONTH

#### KEY FIGURES

**1,598**

irregular arrivals recorded during the reporting month

**4,551**

total arrivals in 2024

**2,125**

persons accommodated in official reception facilities (as of 3 March 2024)

**5%**

children in families

**10%**

unaccompanied children

**2%**

single adult females

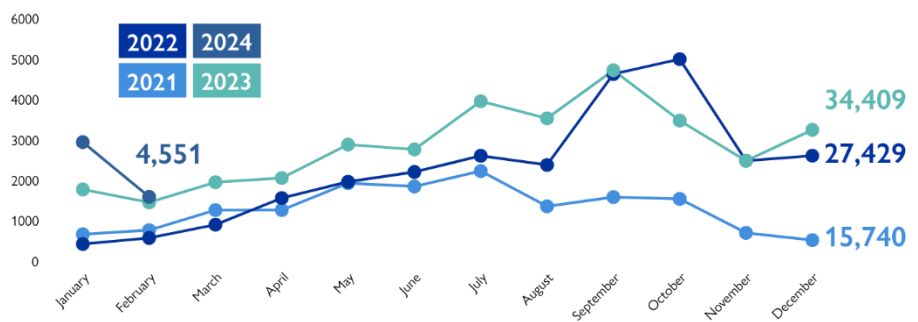
#### Main nationalities

**37%** Syrian Arab Republic

**17%** Afghanistan

**10%** Morocco

In February 2024<sup>1</sup>, authorities recorded 1,598 irregular arrivals in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), which is almost half compared to the figure from the preceding month (2,953). The majority of new arrivals declared to originate from the Syrian Arab Republic (37%), Afghanistan (17%), and Morocco (10%). 78% (1,251) of them were issued an “Attestation on Intention to Seek Asylum” (AISA). In 2024 so far, BiH authorities have registered 4,551 irregular arrivals in BiH, which is 40% more compared to the same period in 2023.



As of the last day of the reporting period, 2,125 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 (2,592). The map below depicts the distribution of beneficiaries in BiH as of 3 March 2024.



<sup>1</sup> Reporting period: from 29 January to 3 March 2024

Data is based on the statistics on arrivals and AISA shared on a weekly basis by the Ministry of Security (MoS). All data provided in this report is based on information available to date.



### CONTEXT ANALYSIS AND INTERAGENCY COORDINATION

#### MIXED MOVEMENTS IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA THIS MONTH:

- According to interviews conducted with 792 migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees, **failed attempted border crossings continued to rise** in February with 79 per cent of all respondents stating that they had attempted and failed to cross into Croatia at least once. This is compared to 58 per cent in January, and 41 per cent in December. The average length of stay in BiH was 26 days, five days longer than January.
- When asked if they were accompanied by people who facilitated their border crossing, **54 per cent responded affirmatively**, a 20 per cent increase compared to January. Respondents who stated that their border crossing was facilitated reported they had paid on average 270 EUR per person to enter from Serbia. The average cost for crossing from Montenegro is reported to have increased to 100 EUR per person, compared to 70 EUR in January.
- **Many of those migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees who arrive in the country late at night opt to sleep near bus stations while they wait for transport options.** Forty-eight per cent of respondents said they had slept outdoors at one point during their stay in BiH, coinciding with higher temperatures recorded in February. Twenty-five per cent squatted in abandoned buildings. Two per cent of respondents paid for private accommodation and a further three per cent paid for hostels or hotels. On average, people paid eight EUR per person per night to stay in private accommodation.
- In February 2024, **the Sector for Asylum of the Ministry of Security registered the asylum claims of 34 persons (22 cases)** and conducted three Refugee Status Determination interviews (three cases). During the month, two persons (two cases) were granted subsidiary protection, and four persons (four cases) had their claims rejected. Four applications were otherwise closed. As of 29 February, 152 asylum-seekers (105 cases) were awaiting processing and final decision in BiH.

#### INTERAGENCY COORDINATION:

- During the reporting period, the **Sarajevo Canton Interagency Coordination Meeting was organized at TRC Blažuj** with the participation of representatives from all partner organizations. A key agenda item was the organization of events to mark the upcoming International Women's Day, inviting all partner organizations to contribute to the planning. Another significant topic discussed was the introduction of new services provided by the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), following the withdrawal of Médecins du Monde (MdM) staff from the reception centers. Finally, all attendees shared information about planned activities and discussed the challenges they face, fostering collaboration and sharing best practices to address the needs of residents in reception centers effectively.

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AVAILABLE

- [IOM – Migrant Mobility Situation Report in Bosnia and Herzegovina - February 2024](#)
- [UNHCR - BiH monthly update – February 2024](#)
- [UNFPA Gender-based violence against women and girls on the move study](#)
- [UNICEF - Podrška i prijatelji kojem se djeca mogu povjeriti](#)
- [SCI – Story about Esma](#)
- [DRC - Border Monitoring Factsheet](#)



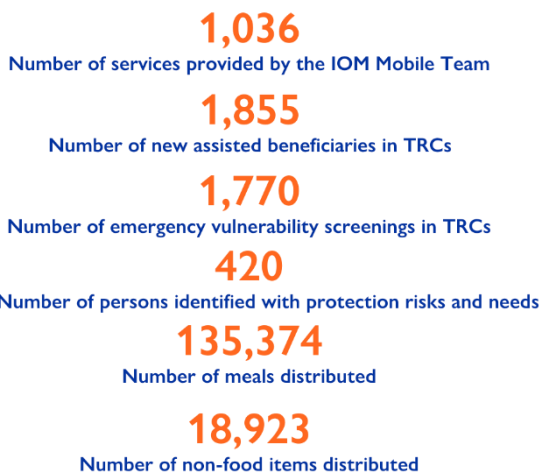
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## IOM



In all reception centres, **IOM started organizing Health Information Sessions** in coordination with the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) to support staff working with beneficiaries in maintaining healthy habits and learn more about the services available. The first session focused on "When to seek medical attention", in order to help identify the most common medical conditions, their symptoms, and how individuals can protect themselves and others.

**IOM and the Service for Foreigners' Affairs (SFA) coordinated activities related to admission and registration of vulnerable categories, notably unaccompanied or separated children (UASC).** In February, the IOM teams coordinated the transfers of 93 UASC and 56 family members, 4 single women and 1 single man from TRC Blažuj to TRC Ušivak, which is a family-oriented centre that caters to the needs of vulnerable groups.



As per its **Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP)** framework and in order to ensure quality, safe and responsive programming in line with the evolving needs of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, in TRC Ušivak, IOM held a **Community Participation Meeting** with six beneficiaries from Afghanistan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Egypt, Iran, Kuwait, and Pakistan. The meeting was also attended by five partner organizations and served as a platform to gather feedback from the beneficiaries about their experience in the reception centre. Based on the feedback received, IOM installed two additional sitting benches in the unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) zone.

**IOM is providing essential services to migrants, asylum seekers and refugees while tailoring them to their specific needs.** In February, in cooperation with its implementing partners Pomozi.ba and FBiH Red Cross, IOM distributed a total of 135,374 meals in the four TRCs. On a daily basis, IOM makes sure that all beneficiaries with specific health issues requiring a special diet are provided with proper food corresponding to their nutritional needs and health requirements. Additionally, the beneficiaries who declare themselves as vegetarians are also provided with the choice of vegetarian meals.



## UNHCR



Seven-year-old refugee boy from Ukraine alongside his dance peers at a tournament in Zenica @UNHCR/BHWI 2024

UNHCR and its legal partner Vaša prava BiH organized, partially jointly with IOM, group and individual information sessions on the asylum procedure and international protection in BiH for 294 persons. Majority of them are from the Syrian Arab Republic, Afghanistan and Morocco. Trend of an increased interest in the asylum procedure in BiH continues, with 34 asylum applications registered in February, mostly from Palestinian, Russian and Syrian nationals.

Individual and group social, recreational, and occupational activities are organized by UNHCR's partner the Bosnia and Herzegovina Women's Initiative (BHWI) with the aim to preserve the mental health of forcibly displaced people and to further develop their life skills. In February, 86 sessions were held, including sewing, cooking, music, art, and sports workshops. BHWI established cooperation with the Hadžići Cultural and Sports Center, allowing two Afghan nationals, one asylum-seeker and one under subsidiary protection, from TRC Ušivak to enroll and access the gym and sport fields free of charge. In addition, three asylum-seekers from Guinea, Senegal and the Democratic Republic of the Congo residing in TRC Ušivak participated in football training in Sarajevo, facilitating integration and social cohesion between forcibly displaced people and local communities.

A new semester of B/C/S language course started in Sarajevo and, for the first time, in Mostar. Attendance continues to increase with 61 asylum-seekers and refugees enrolled in eight different groups from beginner to advanced level. Learning the local language is a key step of the integration journey, and UNHCR also intends to organize such classes for forcibly displaced people residing in TRC Lipa who expressed interest in learning the local language.

**294**

persons provided with information related to asylum in BiH

**139**

persons assisted with free legal aid related to asylum in BiH

**53**

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

**137**

persons assisted with psychosocial support

**86**

social, recreational and occupational therapy sessions organized



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## UNICEF



In partnership with Fenix in TRC Borići and World Vision in TRC Ušivak 43 children (23 girls and 20 boys) and 45 parents, out of which three pregnant women, were reached with **infant and young child feeding (IYCF) services**. In February, pediatric nurses were focused on activities and workshops with aim of empowering parents for the challenges that parenthood brings, workshops aimed at educating parents on child development and creating healthy habits and daily individual consultations and support for parents and children.

**316 children (38 girls and 278 boys of which 202 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. 275 children (30 girls) in TRCs Borići and Ušivak attended the Akelius Digital Language course. Two children from TRC Ušivak were enrolled in regular classes in primary school Pazarić.

UNICEF/WV Child protection and legal guardian teams provided support with **registration, accommodation and access to services** for 367 unaccompanied and separated children in both TRCs ensuring 24/7 monitoring and support. The team also implemented 159 activities for children in TRCs including educational, creative and sport activities. 260 children were provided with mental health and psychosocial support in both TRCs.

The quarterly meeting of the BiH Child Protection Working Group was organized in February, bringing together UN agencies, non-governmental organizations and service providers. During the meeting, an exchange of information, identified challenges and priorities in the context of capacity building was ensured to facilitate adequate coordination between key actors.

Throughout the reporting period 130 children (51 girls and 79 boys) benefited from activities in the Child Friendly Spaces in both TRCs. Various creative workshops were held with aim of encouraging children's creativity and individuality and developing fine motor skills. CFS animators also implemented psychosocial activities to increase resilience and preserve mental health of children.

- 649**  
children on the move benefitting from 24/7 protection and care
- 292**  
UASC benefitting from the appointment and support of a legal guardian
- 316**  
Refugee and migrant children benefitting from structured non-formal education, language courses and vocational training
- 43**  
Refugee and migrant children supported with integration into the formal education system
- 43**  
Refugee and migrant children benefitting from Mother-baby corner activities



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## UNFPA



February was marked by various activities and initiatives delivered by UNFPA aimed at **enhancing protection and empowerment of vulnerable persons in TRCs**. Throughout February, there was a noticeable decrease in the arrival of new persons, however, there was a consistent presence of residents from Arabic-speaking backgrounds who continued to require specialized support throughout the month.

The UNFPA team together with Service for Foreigners' Affairs (SFA) and IOM enhanced **protection of vulnerable male residents** by ensuring 161 vulnerable young man benefited from protection sensitive accommodation in the Green Zones in TRC Lipa and TRC Blazuj. This helped mitigate the risks they might face due to their age, which rendered them particularly susceptible to various forms of exploitation and harm.

Education plays one of the key roles in the prevention of gender-based violence, therefore **UNFPA delivered actions to raise awareness amongst female and male residents on Gender Based Violence (GBV)** through a series of GBV educational sessions. UNFPA provided MHPSS support through sessions at the Women and Girls Center, where discussions centered on topics like "My circle of control" to enhance mental health awareness amongst vulnerable women. Furthermore, psychosocial support was tailored to the needs of survivors of Gender-based violence, facilitating faster adaptation to the reception center and developing coping mechanisms for everyday stressors.

Recognizing the diverse Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH) issues faced by persons on the move, the UNFPA team, in collaboration with SRH experts in local health care centers delivered **sexual and reproductive health services** through individual consultations, group sessions and referrals for in depth examinations. February was characterized by a **series of engaging and enlightening empowerment workshops** centered around the theme of love, commemorating the spirit of the holiday. One notable event implemented in the UNFPA Women and Girls Centre, titled "What is Love" served as both a creative and educational platform for discussing various aspects of partnership relations, emotions, assertive communication, and the profound love for family and children, evoking feelings of nostalgia for one's homeland.

**509**

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

**380**

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

**1020**

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

**538**

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

**197**

Number of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers educated on GBV



## DRC



**1,179**

Number of medical examinations

**7,127**

Number of medically attended by DRC staff

**27**

Number of referrals to Primary and Secondary Healthcare centers

**1,463**

Number referrals through protection activities in TRCs and outreach

**167**

Number of persons reporting pushbacks in the reporting period

During the reporting period, with the exit of its co-partner: Médecins du Monde (MDM), DRC has taken psychological support and mental health services as supplementary to the provision of health services.

During the reporting period, psychologists had two crisis interventions and focused on severe psychiatric cases with daily follow-up and proper intake of psychotropic medication. Three hospitalizations were supported as well as one relocation of a discharged beneficiary from UKC Sarajevo to TRC Lipa.

Hospitalized beneficiaries all manifested acute psychotic states and needed emergency hospitalization. In case of self-harming was identified, and with joint action of the Health and Mental Health DRC teams, the situation was taken care of, and necessary help was provided.

A total of 1498 medical screenings were provided, 1078 medical examinations, and 68 interventions were supported by the medical team. The number of medically attended beneficiaries by DRC health response was 7127, which shows the dedication of DRC teams to provide necessary health services to all beneficiaries.

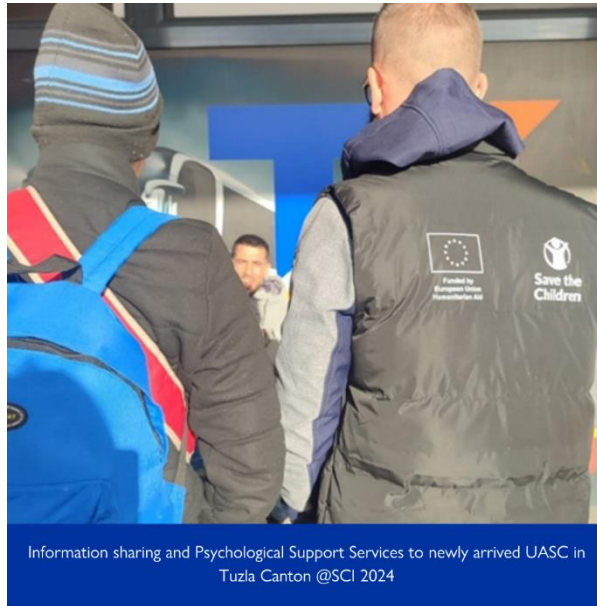
Pediatric teams provided scheduled visits, with 101 examinations and 14 interventions conducted, as well as nine systematic examinations for the school process.

In February, DRC jointly with IOM started health info sessions, with a focus on self-treatment and reporting mechanisms in case of common diseases. Within the reporting period, a total of four info sessions were held, and essential information was shared with over 50 beneficiaries.

### Common diagnoses prevailing in TRC:

- Diseases of the respiratory system
- Diseases of the skin and subcutaneous tissue
- Diseases of the musculoskeletal system and connective tissue

## Save the Children (SC)



Information sharing and Psychological Support Services to newly arrived UASC in Tuzla Canton @SCI 2024

In February, Save the Children (SC) outreach teams supported **69 UASC across BiH**, with most identified during transit through Una-Sana Canton. The primary countries of origin were Morocco (31%), Egypt (25%), Afghanistan (17%), and Syria (16%). On a positive note, a significant majority (85.07%) reported being officially recognized as minors and registered by the SFA before reaching Una-Sana Canton.

Although the count of potential UASC identified outside reception centers remained stable compared to January, the number of new arrivals to TRC Blažuj dropped by half. Blažuj is typically the primary site for identifying newly arrived UASC in BiH. **During the reporting period, the SC team ensured child protection services for 95 potential UASC who arrived at the Blažuj reception center.** All of them were successfully referred and escorted to the designated zone for UASC in the Ušivak TRC. However, a noteworthy presence of potential male-headed families from Syria persists both in the Blažuj TRC and at outreach locations.

Additionally, SC outreach teams assisted **9 single women (8 from Nepal and 1 from Morocco) and 14 families**, comprising 16 children, 17 women, and 21 men. The families hailed from diverse origins, including Nepal (6 families), Syria (3 families), Turkey (2 families), China (1 family), and Mongolia (2 families).

In February, **60 children (37 boys and 23 girls) participated in the preparatory school program in Una-Sana Canton**, representing a decline of approximately 30% compared to January. Among them, 35 children (22 boys and 13 girls) were new enrollees, with 25 being from Syria. SC facilitated 86 non-formal education, creative, and sports workshops.

Together with their peers from the local elementary school "Harmani I," children on the move engaged in activities to **celebrate The International Day Against Violence and Bullying at School**, including Cyberbullying. Children skillfully crafted small pink T-shirts, distributing them not only among their peers at school and Borici TRC but also among school staff and TRC Borici personnel, who proudly wore this important symbol.

**69**  
potential unaccompanied and separated children benefited from the outreach child protection services

**95**  
potential UASC supported in Blažuj TRC and successfully referred to Ušivak TRC

**442**  
information-sharing instances to children and adults outside of TRCs

**60**  
children benefited from a preparatory school programme





HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MONTH IN PICTURES



Health Info Session in TRC Blažuj  
@IOM 2024



Group psychosocial counselling session in TRC Ušivak  
@UNHCR/BHWI 2024



Akelius class in TRC Ušivak ©UNICEF 2024



Empowerment workshop commemorating International Mother Language Day @UNFPA 2024



Provision of health services to beneficiaries  
@DRC 2024



Marking the Pink Shirt Day in TRC Boridi @SCI 2024



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