Overview of the ongoing COVID-19 epidemic situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, June 14th

(Credit: WHO Country Office in Bosnia and Herzegovina; Sources: IPH FBiH, IPH RS, FMoH, MoCA)
SITUATION OVERVIEW

The BiH Council of Ministers decision on State of Natural or Other Disaster (BiH’s equivalent of „State of Emergency“) remains in place. At the entity levels, however, the previously declared State of Emergency in the RS was terminated on 20 May, and the State of Natural Disaster in FBiH was, likewise, lifted on 29 May. Both the RS and the Federation entities now allow movement of all population categories with a mandatory requirement that everyone wear face masks in enclosed spaces/areas. Curfews have been lifted across the entire territory of BiH. BiH citizens entering into the country no longer need to observe self-isolation, while foreign citizens entering the country on business need to show a letter of invitation from a legal body/institution which is engaging that person, as well as certificate reflecting a negative COVID-19 test result that is not older than 48hours. Borders are open for citizens of Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia as of 1 June and air travel is allowed to resume. The repatriation of BiH citizens and foreign citizens in BiH is allowed with respect to the protocols currently in place.

Localized clusters continued to appear throughout BiH, raising the overall numbers of new cases, most notably in Tuzla Canton, followed by towns of Tesanj, Modrica, Doboj, Zvornik, Kostajnica. Sarajevo Canton also continues to report new cases. In the FBiH Entity, Tuzla, Sarajevo and Una-Sana Cantons were endorsed to declare the “State of Epidemics” and the official procedure is in motion. Reportedly, the FBiH Ministry of Health will initiate the same procedure for the entire Entity. Of particular concern are situations where cases were confirmed in kindergartens (e.g. in Tuzla), as well as in mines (recently in Lukavac). However, numbers of recovered patients are also increasing (reported as 2178 on 16/06 at 16:00 hrs). The line health authorities reported a total of 163 cases of death related to Covid-19 induced complications since the first case was reported in BiH.

Inspectorate units have intensified their presence in the communities, spot-checking the observance of measures in public places, shopping malls and other business premises, including observing citizen respect of mandatory measures such as wearing masks and respecting physical distance.

Distribution of COVID-19 confirmed cases in Bosnia and Herzegovina, June 14th

(Credit: WHO Country Office in Bosnia and Herzegovina; Sources: IPH FBiH, IPH RS, FMoH, MoCA)
Case Fatality Rate in Bosnia and Herzegovina vs Global Case Fatality Rate, June 14th

Distribution of tests performed and COVID-19 confirmed cases in Bosnia and Herzegovina, June 14th

(Credit: WHO Country Office in Bosnia and Herzegovina; Sources: IPH FBiH, IPH RS, FMoH, MoCA, ECDC)
UN SUPPORT IN RESPONSE – LATEST

The United Nations Secretary General released the “Roadmap for Digital Cooperation” on 11 June, with a set of recommended actions for the international community to help ensure all people are connected, respected, and protected in the digital age. The Roadmap comes at a critical inflection point for digital issues, with the Covid-19 pandemic accelerating digitization and magnifying both opportunities and challenges of digital technology.

Recommendations for concrete action follow 8 areas: (1) Achieving universal connectivity by 2030, (2) Promoting digital public goods to unlock a more equitable world, (3) Ensuring digital inclusion for all, including the most vulnerable, (4) Strengthening digital capacity building, (5) Ensuring the protection of human rights in the digital era, (6) Supporting global cooperation on artificial intelligence that is trustworthy, human rights based, safe and sustainable and promotes peace, (7) Promoting digital trust and security— calling for a global dialogue to advance the Sustainable Development Goals, (8) Building a more effective architecture for digital cooperation.

Link to UN Secretary General’s Roadmap for Digital Cooperation

(Credit: WHO Country Office in Bosnia and Herzegovina; Sources: IPH FBiH, IPH RS, FMoH, MoCA)
In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the first online conference “Governments in BiH on the Digital Transformation Journey” was organised by UNDP and the British Embassy on 10 and 11 June, involving over 130 international and domestic experts and decision-makers at all levels of governance, who shared experiences in using new technologies within Covid-19 response and discussed opportunities for an accelerated enhancement of quality of public services and public administration. The establishment of a network of representatives of governments and digital transformation experts was presented during the conference as a joint initiative of UNDP and the British Embassy, aiming to create a collaborative platform which will be used to discuss visions, experiences and solutions for a new generation of administration in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Distribution of vital medical supplies and equipment continues as part of the UNDP-led purchase and delivery of planned 2.9 million items financed by the European Union, Governments of Norway, Switzerland and the institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina. To date 2.1 million items of medical supplies and equipment have been delivered to health institutions countrywide, including the ventilators, personal protective equipment (PPE), COVID tests, ECG and X-Ray machines.

Joint UN Dialogue for the Future program signed Letters of commitment with the grantees awarded under the regional small grants facility. The grants will enable activities advancing social cohesion in BiH and with partners in Montenegro and Serbia, adapted to Covid-19 response. E-Upshift Platform was advertised on social media reaching out to youth and adolescents across BiH. UNICEF-led Rapid assessment of the Covid-19 impact to the social protection system has been expanded to cover more cantons.

On 15 of June, 23 migrants were accommodated in the isolation areas set up in the TRCs/ETC for those having Covid-19 symptoms. One of the doctors working in TRC Sedra tested positive for Covid-19, and all those who have been in contact with the doctor were put in isolation immediately, with the increased capacity in the isolation area of TRC Sedra. UNICEF and Save the Children continue to provide 24/7 on-site child protection support to the unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) in Una – Sana Canton within the designated zones in Bira and Miral TRCs including protection support at the Sedra and Borići TRCs for R/M children and their families and UASC. Child Protection Officers provide 24/7 support including information sharing, case management, general assistance and referral to relevant institutions/organizations; medical escort and follow-up on medical cases.
Non-formal and online formal education continues to be provided in the TRCs, with 170 children participating in online classes last week. Non-formal education workshops also continue – 51 in total – as well as individual workshops for parents.

UNICEF continued to facilitate communications between the Centers for Social Welfare Cazin and Bihac in order to address the need for additional legal guardians in TRC Sedra regarding an increased number of the unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) in TRC. Temporary solution was facilitated on assigning 2 legal guardians from Bihac to Cazin. UNICEF, UNHCR, IOM, UNFPA, SFA, Save the Children and Danish Refugee Council raised the issue of lack of accommodation capacities for vulnerable categories in Una- Sana Canton emphasizing a need to find a long-term solution to respond to this issue.

In March 2020, UN Women conducted a rapid assessment of the status of specialized services provided by eight shelters/safe houses in BiH to find out their immediate needs for sustaining their activities. Safe houses in Bosnia and Herzegovina are struggling to provide adequate protection to women survivors of violence and their children, as domestic violence is seen on the rise due to the Covid-19 crisis. In partnership with the Government of Sweden, UN Women delivered assistance packages to all eight safe houses with items identified as priorities.

Check the running list of United Nations resources at the UNCT BiH website.