Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH)

927 people arrived irregularly in March, which is 52% more compared with the previous month.[1]

Irregular arrivals recorded in 2025 sharply decreased compared with 2024. In the first three months of the year, 2,183 arrivals were recorded vs. 6,544 in the same period in 2024.[1]

Top three declared countries of origin in March are Egypt (17%), Afghanistan (17%) and Morocco (16%).[1]

72% of people arriving irregularly were issued an "attestation of the expressed intent to apply for asylum" (AISA).[1]

The Sector for Asylum of the Ministry of Security (MoS) registered the asylum claims of **5** people and conducted **5** Refugee Status Determination (RSD) interviews.

9 positive decisions were issued, 4 granting refugee status and 5 granting subsidiary protection, while **2** negative decisions were issued. 6 applications were suspended/terminated.[2]

SELECTED POPULATION DATA (END OF MARCH)

43 people represented by UNHCR/Vaša prava BiH waiting for the registration of their asylum claim

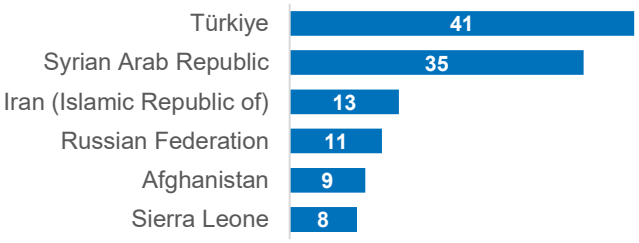
186 asylum-seekers with claims pending processing and final decision

271 people under international protection (**48** with refugee status and **223** under subsidiary protection)

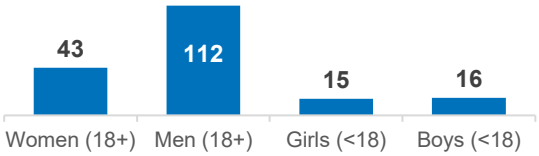
13 stateless people and people at risk of statelessness

ASYLUM-SEEKERS (END OF MARCH)

TOP-SIX COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN



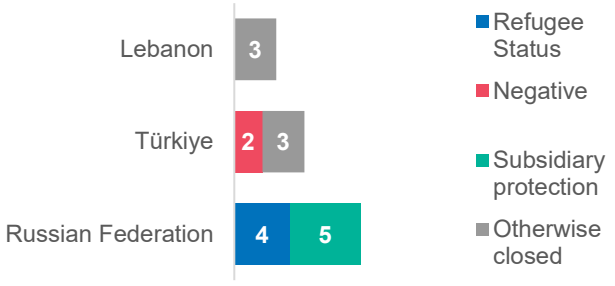
AGE AND GENDER



Of **31** children, **9** are unaccompanied or separated

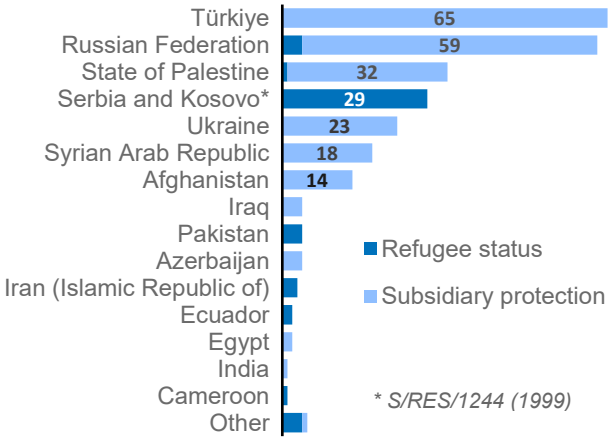
DECISIONS[2] IN MARCH

PER COUNTRY OF ORIGIN (ALL INSTANCES)



PEOPLE UNDER INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION (END OF MARCH)[2]

TOP-15 COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN



[1] Data based on weekly statistics from the Ministry of Security.

[2] Decisions not necessarily final and binding. Figures refer to the number of people covered by decisions.

NEED FOR FACILITATED ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT FOR ASYLUM-SEEKERS

On 26 March, GiZ and UNHCR organized a roundtable in Sarajevo on economic prospects for asylum-seekers in BiH, bringing together key stakeholders from the public and private sectors, international community and civil society, who are working on asylum- and employment-related issues. Participants exchanged on experiences and best practices, identifying challenges and opportunities related to labour market access. Currently, as per the Law on Asylum, asylum-seekers have to wait for a period of nine months from the formal registration of their asylum application before they can enter the formal labour market in BiH. While there are some fragmented solutions, mainly provided by the civil society and international organizations, asylum-seekers need systemic and harmonized solutions, coordinated with public institutions. Such long waiting times leave asylum-seekers dependent and unable to become self-sufficient, hindering their integration prospects. It may also push them to proceed with onward movement, or to resort to informal or illegal work, making them vulnerable to exploitation. According to the EU legislation (DIRECTIVE 2024/1346), asylum-seekers should have access to the labour market no later than six months from the date when their application was registered. Several Member States, including Croatia, have further reduced this period to zero, two or three months. Thus, UNHCR advocates for a reduction to three months of the period that asylum-seekers must wait in BiH before legal employment, to allow them to integrate faster, while, at the same time, addressing shortages in the labour market.

UKRAINIANS WHO ARRIVED AFTER 24/02/2022 AND ARE CURRENTLY IN BIH: 281

22 people under subsidiary protection

3 asylum-seekers waiting for interview or final decision

256 people applied for temporary residence on humanitarian grounds, which permits stay up to six months but without rights (besides residency)

ASYLUM OVERVIEW (2023 – 2025)

	2023	2024	2025
Applications	147	234	31
Refugee status[2]	4	2	4
Subsidiary protection status[2]	63	93	15
Rejected applications[2]	9	18	2
Procedure terminated[2]	41	33	21

[2] Decisions not necessarily final and binding. Figures refer to the number of people covered by decisions.

AVERAGE PROCESSING TIME: 295 DAYS

Average time from AISA issuance to first-instance decision, for decisions issued during the last six months (38 cases).

** For the waiting time between AISA issuance and registration, detention cases are excluded, as UNHCR does not receive data to calculate it. However, they are included in the next two steps.*

ASYLUM PROCESSING BACKLOG

56 DAYS

Average waiting time between AISA issuance and registration, excluding detention cases. This waiting time covers claims registered in the last six month (Oct. 2024 – March 2025). It has decreased by 33% compared with the previous six-month period, when it was averaging 84 days (April – Sept. 2024).

314 DAYS

59% of asylum-seekers (74 cases) pending a RSD interview have been waiting for more than six months (314 days in average). These cases should be processed timely. As per the Law on Asylum, waiting time from registration to decision should be up to six months, and exceptionally up to 18 months.

ACHIEVEMENTS IN MARCH

Data provided based on information available to date.

- **117** people provided with legal information on asylum in BiH through individual and group counselling
- **36** people assisted with free legal aid on asylum
- **139** people assisted with psychosocial support
- **20** sessions in social, recreational and occupational therapy activities
- In March, the latest round of voucher distribution for forcibly displaced people from Ukraine (covering for January and February) was concluded by UNHCR's partner the Catholic Relief Services (CRS), in cooperation with the Red Cross societies. 105 people (in 39 households), including 47 children, residing across the country, benefitted from cash-based assistance to support their basic needs.

Job counselling workshop for refugees in BiH @CRS

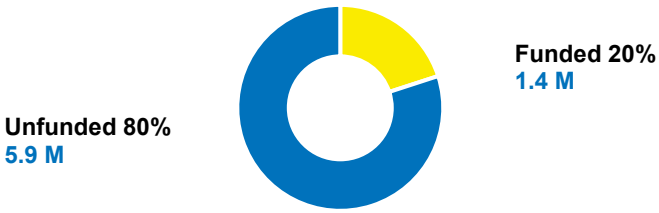
Performance "I Want to Live" with the participation of seven refugee women in BiH @BHWI

NEWS & EVENTS

- On 18-19 March, UNHCR's partner CRS organized a job counselling workshop, attended by six individuals under international protection. Sessions covered various practical topics, such as job search strategies, how to draft a CV and a cover letter, and preparation for interviews. Such programmes are vital for securing employment and achieving economic self-reliance of refugees, as they help bridge the gap between their skills and the job market requirements in their new country, provide support in understanding the local job market, and build confidence.
- To mark the International Women's Day, two performances of the play "I Want to Live" were staged, with support from the Bosnia and Herzegovina Women's Initiative. The play, which is inspired by real-life stories, empowered seven refugee women to speak out on stage about their experiences and to amplify the voices of those who are unable to speak for themselves.

FUNDING UPDATE

Financial requirements: **USD 7.3 million**



UNHCR is grateful to the donors of unearmarked and softly earmarked contributions to the 2025 global programmes.

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UNHCR is also grateful for the generous contributions from the private sector and individuals.

UNHCR BiH is grateful to the donors to its 2025 programme.

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