Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH)

The authorities reported **1,392** irregular arrivals in December, a figure that is broadly stable compared with the previous month (1,458).[1]

Top three declared countries of origin are Afghanistan (29%), Egypt (15%) and Sudan (13%).[1]

76% were issued an "attestation of expressed intent to seek asylum" (AISA).[1]

The Sector for Asylum of the Ministry of Security (MoS) registered the asylum claims of **16** people and conducted **6** Refugee Status Determination (RSD) interviews.

In December, **7** positive decisions were issued, one granting refugee status, and six granting subsidiary protection, alongside **7** negative decisions. 10 applications were suspended / terminated.[2]

SELECTED POPULATION DATA (END OF DECEMBER)

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

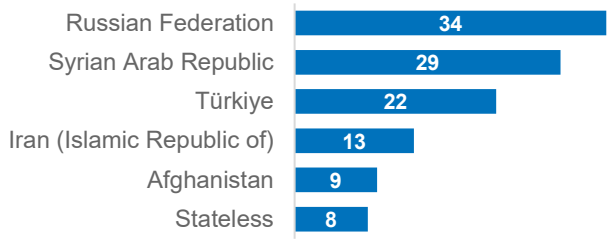
198 asylum-seekers with claims pending processing and final decision

286 people under international protection (**45** with refugee status and **241** under subsidiary protection)

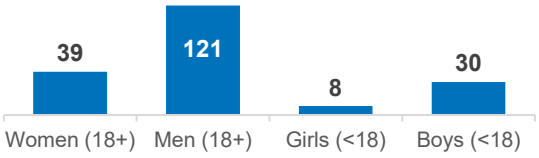
17 stateless people and people at risk of statelessness

ASYLUM-SEEKERS (END OF DECEMBER)

TOP-SIX COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN



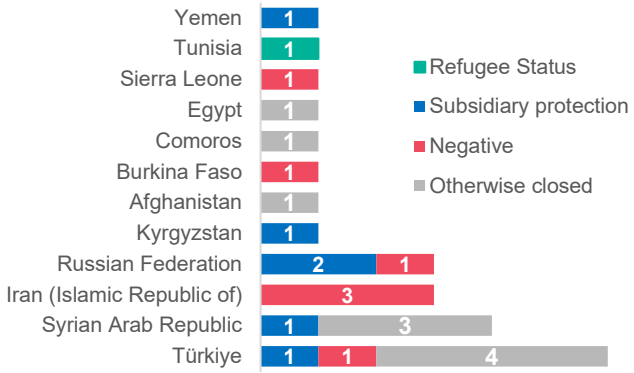
AGE AND GENDER



Of **38** children, **10** were unaccompanied or separated at the time of registration

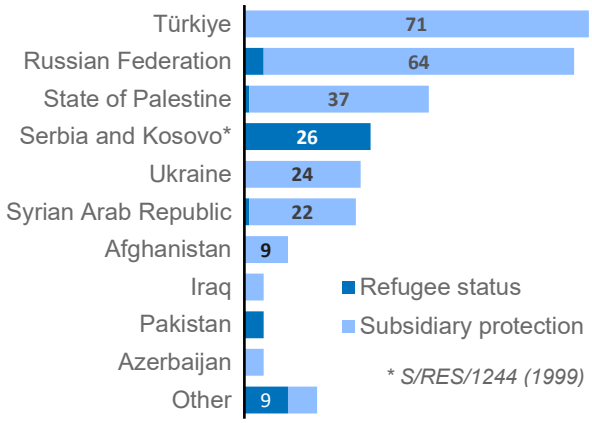
DECISIONS[2] IN DECEMBER

PER COUNTRY OF ORIGIN (ALL INSTANCES)



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

TOP-10 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.*

YEAR-END ASYLUM ANALYSIS

In 2025, BiH authorities recorded a sharp decline in mixed movement arrivals compared to previous years, mirrored by a decrease in the number of "attestations of expressed intent to seek asylum" (AISA) issued. Despite this downward trend, many remain in need of international protection. Under regional protection monitoring, UNHCR and partners interviewed 430 people in BiH, of whom 71% reported leaving their country due to generalized violence and insecurity, threats to life, or discrimination.

During the year, 175 asylum-seekers had their claims registered by the MoS, predominantly Russian, Turkish, Syrian and Palestinian nationals. The pace of asylum processing remained slow, despite some improvement in the second half of the year. Significant delays persist in refugee status determination (RSD) interviews. These delays contribute to a backlog, hinder timely access to rights for those in need of protection, and may motivate onward movement. At the same time, the increasing diversification of countries of origin among asylum-seekers has required additional resources and more tailored RSD approaches. In December, UNHCR closed its Info Centre, previously used by the authorities for asylum processing. Pending the opening of government premises, the MoS relocated registration and RSD interviews to the Asylum Centre Delijaš. UNHCR underscores the urgency of opening new premises to allow asylum-seekers to register their claims independently, without waiting to be invited by the authorities.

This year, six individuals were granted refugee status. While this represents an increase compared to previous years, UNHCR considers that many who deserve refugee status were instead granted subsidiary protection status, denying them access to a durable solution. Three refugees were naturalized during the year, a positive development given that citizenship represents the strongest form of legal protection. However, naturalization procedures are generally slow and access to naturalization remains limited to refugees and excludes individuals granted subsidiary protection, an issue that would require to be addressed in the Law on Citizenship.

UKRAINIANS WHO ARRIVED AFTER 24/02/2022 AND ARE CURRENTLY IN BIH: 327

23 people under subsidiary protection

4 asylum-seekers waiting for interview or final decision

300 people received 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	235	175
Refugee status[2]	4	2	6
Subsidiary protection status[2]	63	93	55
Rejected applications[2]	9	16	34
Procedure terminated[2]	41	33	100

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

AVERAGE PROCESSING TIME: 441 DAYS

Average time from AISA issuance to first-instance decision, for decisions issued during the last six months (39 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

65 DAYS

Average time between AISA issuance and registration, excluding detention cases. This time covers claims registered in the last six month (July – Dec. 2025). It has decreased by 40% compared with the previous six-month period, when it was averaging 109 days (January – June 2025).

366 DAYS

48% of asylum-seekers (63 cases) pending RSD interview have been waiting for over six months (366 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 DECEMBER

Data provided based on information available to date.

- **40** people provided with legal information on asylum in BiH through individual and group counselling
- **62** people assisted with asylum-related free legal aid
- **92** people assisted with psychosocial support
- **17** sessions in social, recreational and occupational therapy activities
- On 2 December, UNHCR and Vaša prava BiH hosted an event to review progress toward ending statelessness in BiH. Key institutions discussed BiH's commitments to end statelessness; implementation of BiH Ombudsmen's recommendations; current challenges in civil registration and proposed solutions; and concrete steps toward a sustainable system to prevent statelessness. This dialogue reaffirmed the shared commitment to ensuring a fundamental right – the right to nationality – and to building a system that protects the most vulnerable.

Performance of the play "I Want to Live" at the Sarajevo School of Science and Technology @BHWI

Individual legal counselling session in Temporary Reception Centre Lipa @Vaša prava BiH

NEWS & EVENTS

- On 6 December, UNHCR's partner the Bosnia and Herzegovina Women's Initiative (BHWI) participated in the Diplomatic Winter Bazar, an annual charity event organized by the international community in Sarajevo. Visitors had the chance to taste culinary specialties prepared by refugees and asylum-seekers in BiH.
- During the 16 Days of Activism campaign, UNHCR's partner BHWI brought powerful messages of resilience and equality to life through a series of events. At the Asylum Centre Delijaš, an exhibition showcased paintings and handicrafts made by forcibly displaced women, highlighting their talent and stories. A focus group discussion was held in the Temporary Reception Centre Blažuj, fostering dialogue on violence prevention, gender equality and non-violent communication. Lastly, the play "I Want to Live", which is inspired by real-life stories of refugee women victims of violence, was performed at the Sarajevo School of Science and Technology, as well as at the Youth Theatre Sarajevo.

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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