Route-based approach operationalization in the Western Balkans

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UNHCR regularly collects data on asylum statistics in the Western Balkans, based on its own monitoring as well as information provided by authorities in each country.[1] This page presents an overview of data from **January to May 2026**.

ASYLUM INTENTIONS[2]

Between January-May 2026, **almost 6,900 intentions to apply for asylum were registered in the region**, mostly from Sudanese (38%), Egyptian (22%) and Afghan (16%) nationals.

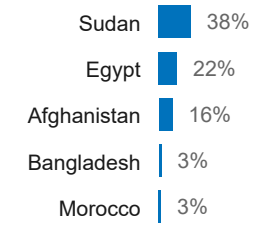
This does not represent unique individuals as people can express an intention to apply for asylum in multiple countries.

Intentions to apply for asylum

Country	'25 (Jan-May)	'26 (YTD)	'26 (May)
1. Albania	28	59	16
2. Bosnia and Herzegovina	2,841	4,853	1,042
3. Montenegro	615	1,800	289
4. Serbia	189	161	32
Total	**3,673**	**6,873**	**1,379**

Intentions by nationality

Top 5 - '26 (YTD)



ASYLUM APPLICATIONS

During the same period, **414 people completed the submission of their asylum applications**, a **37% increase** compared to the same period last year.

Applications were mostly from Russian (16%), Egyptian (16%) and Turkish (11%) nationals.

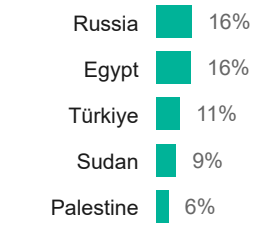
In terms of gender and age, 89% of applicants were adults and 11% were children. Among adults (91%) as well as children (81%), males accounted for the majority of applicants.

Asylum applications

Country	'25 (Jan-May)	'26 (YTD)	'26 (May)
1. Albania	16	10	4
2. Bosnia and Herzegovina	60	88	34
3. Montenegro	41	66	14
4. North Macedonia	89	47	15
5. Serbia	59	70	11
6. Kosovo[1]	37	133	63
Total	**302**	**414**	**141**

Asylum-seekers by nationality

Top 5 - '26 (YTD)



ASYLUM PROCESS

282 first instance decisions were issued in the first five months of the year, including 49 granting complementary forms of protection and 15 granting refugee status. 80 applicants were rejected and 138 applications were otherwise closed.

Excluding cases otherwise closed, on average **44% of asylum-seekers were granted international protection.**[3] Status was mostly granted to Russian (28%), Afghan (19%), and Syrian (9%) nationals, as well as stateless persons (13%).

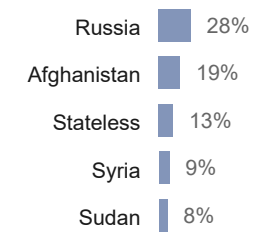
As of end of May, **612 asylum applications were still pending** a decision across the region.

First instance indicators

Country	Decisions '26 (YTD)	Recog. rate '26 (YTD)	Pending cases '26 (May)
1. Albania	28	70%	16
2. Bosnia and Herzegovina	75	69%	215
3. Montenegro	63	22%	227
4. North Macedonia	36	0%	22
5. Serbia	66	29%	120
6. Kosovo[1]	14	17%	12
Total	**282**	**44%**	**612**

Positive decisions by nationality

Top 5 - '26 (YTD)



[1] All references to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999).
[2] In countries with a two-step asylum process, applicants first express intent to apply (Kosovo and North Macedonia currently do not use this system).
[3] Recognition rate based on decisions granting refugee status or complementary forms of protection.

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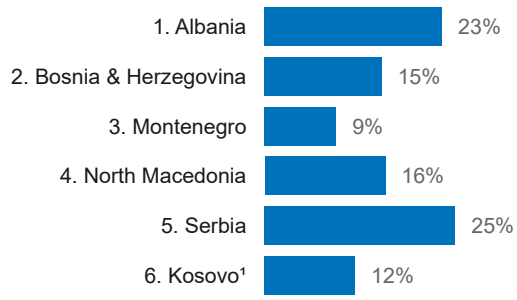
UNHCR and its partners are regularly collecting data about the profiles, protection risks and needs of refugees and asylum-seekers within the mixed movement in the Western Balkans through the Regional Protection Monitoring System (RPMS). This page presents findings based on **407** interviews conducted in the last 6 months between **December 2025 and May 2026**. RPMS interviews are conducted with randomly selected respondents. However, as non-probability sampling is used, results cannot necessarily be extrapolated to all refugees and asylum-seekers in the region.

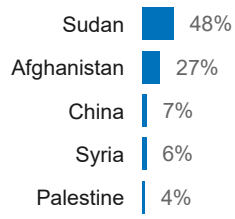
SAMPLE BREAKDOWN

Interviews by country

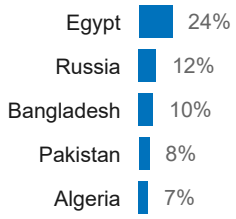


Respondents by nationality

Top 5 - respondents from refugee-producing countries²



Top 5 - respondents from all other countries



Average respondent age

28

Female respondents

8%

Male respondents

92%

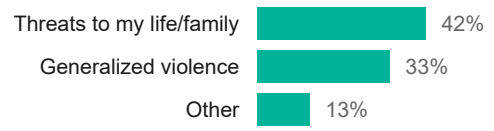
MOVEMENT PATTERNS / INTENDED DESTINATION

For respondents from refugee-producing countries, the most common reasons for leaving the country of origin are **threats to life / family (42%)** and **generalized violence (33%)**. **France and Germany** were most often mentioned as intended destination.

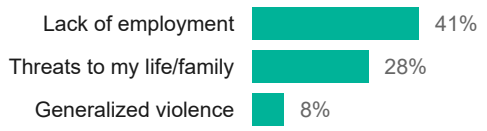
For respondents from non-refugee producing countries, lack of employment is the main reason (41%). Although destinations are predominantly in Western Europe, some also are in the Western Balkans themselves.

Reasons for leaving country of origin

Top 3 - respondents from refugee-producing countries²

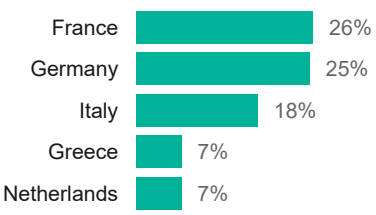


Top 3 - respondents from all other countries

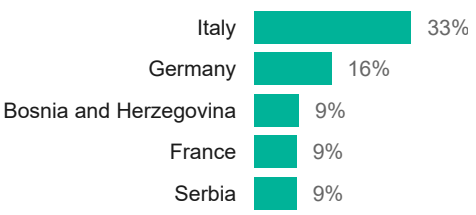


Intended destination

Top 5 - respondents from refugee-producing countries²



Top 5 - respondents from all other countries

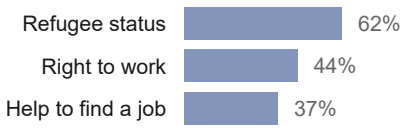


LOCAL INTEGRATION / INFORMATION NEEDS

For respondents from refugee-producing countries, **legal status (62%)** and **employment prospects** were most often mentioned as factors influencing the decision to stay in the country of interview. The topic on which more information was most commonly needed is how to access psychological aid (41%).

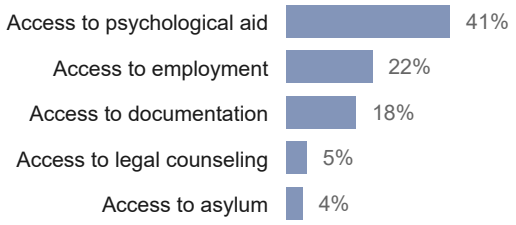
Factors influencing decision to stay in country of interview³

Top 3 - respondents from refugee-producing countries² - who are willing to stay in the country of interview



Current information needs

Top 5 - respondents from refugee-producing countries²



¹ All references to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999).
² Countries of origin with recognition rates of 20% or higher in 2025 in the EU+, see: Recognition Rates | European Union Agency for Asylum.
³ Multiple responses were possible, so percentages can go over 100% when added.