



BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

UNITED NATIONS COUNTRY TEAM (UNCT) OPERATIONAL UPDATE REFUGEE/MIGRANT SITUATION

1-28 February 2018

HIGHLIGHTS

- Twenty-four police officers from Bosnia and Herzegovina attended an information session on migrants, refugees and other persons of concern, on 19 February 2018. The majority of those who attended were team and unit leaders engaged in the protection of foreign diplomatic representations. The session was organized by the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) for the Directorate for Coordination of Police Bodies (DCPB) in Sarajevo and delivered by UNHCR and IOM representatives. Another session, for 22 officers, will be held on 6 March 2018.
- On 26 February 2018, UNHCR together with the UNCT, organized a meeting to discuss the current refugee/migrant situation in BiH with civil society members including local NGOs. Representatives of the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees and the Ministry of Security's Sector for Asylum were invited. During the meeting participants exchanged information on key issues and discussed plans for a joint assessment.



Mio Shindo-Braaten, UNHCR Associate Protection Officer, providing counselling to asylum seekers. V. Pilav/UNHCR

KEY FIGURES FOR 2018

472 (1 Jan – 28 Feb)

detected arrivals to BiH

21 (0 girls, 21 boys)

unaccompanied minors assisted

262

people assisted with transport, food, NFI and psychosocial counselling

117 (16 females, 101 males)

Asylum applications

87 (3 females, 84 males)

people assisted at the UNHCR Information Center

198

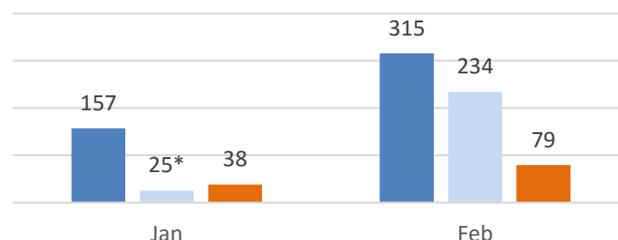
people provided with legal counselling

PRIORITIES

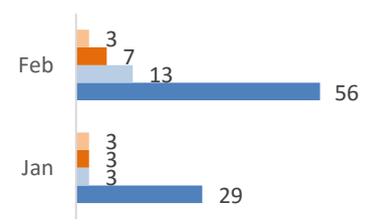
- Continue supporting BiH authorities at all levels respond to existing and emerging needs
- Organize joint rapid assessment of needs of refugees and migrants in Sarajevo and other locations (dates still to be confirmed)
- Improve referral mechanism for accommodation for asylum seekers
- Improve referral mechanism for UASC to ensure guardianship

Population of concern: **315** people of concern for the month of February

Migrant/Refugee Arrivals to BiH and disaggregation of Asylum Seekers



Age and Gender of Asylum Seekers in BiH



■ Arrivals ■ Intention to Seek Asylum ■ Asylum Applications ■ Girls ■ Women ■ Boys ■ Men

* # to be confirmed

UPDATE ON ACHIEVEMENTS

Operational Context

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) observed a steady increase in number of migrants and refugee arrivals in February 2018. Most of them crossed the border in an irregular manner (i.e. at non-official border crossing points), majority of arrivals from Montenegro. Currently, while the Asylum Centre in Trnovo, with a 154-person accommodation capacity is not full, there are an increasing number of refugees and migrants in need of assistance at various locations throughout the country including entrance and exit points towards Croatia, as well as in Sarajevo. The [Migration Coordination Body](#) led by the Ministry of Security has been closely reviewing the evolving context of the refugee and migrant situation in BiH, and it is expected that in the coming weeks they will present a new plan for endorsement by the Council of Ministers.

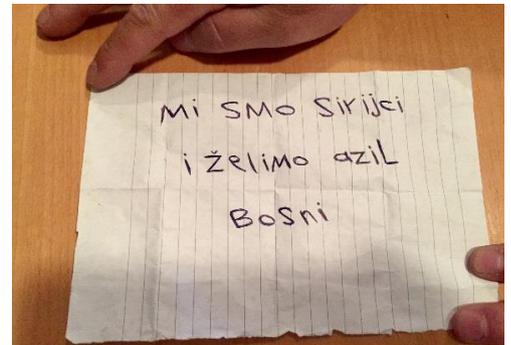
Achievements



Protection

Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR in partnership with Vasa Prava BiH and Bosnia Herzegovina Women's Initiative Foundation (BHWI) and their network of offices throughout the country, provides assistance to asylum seekers, refugees and persons in need of international protection in BiH. UNHCR also supports the Ministry of Security (MoS) and the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees (MHRR), with respect to their role in accommodating asylum seekers and refugees by contributing to operational costs of running the Asylum Centre (managed by MoS), and the Refugee Reception Centre in Salakovac, near Mostar (managed by MHRR). These key and longstanding partnerships have since the beginning of this year, ensured basic protection including legal assistance, psychosocial support, and access to the asylum procedure for 198 persons in need of international protection in 2018.
- During the requested period, IOM Mobile Teams assisted 18 people (6 adult men, 4 women, 5 boys, 3 girls) with transportation and secondary screening of vulnerabilities and potential needs. Three minors from Kosovo/UNSCR 1244 were among the group assisted with transportation. Cases of identified asylum seekers were referred during the period to UNHCR, Vaša Prava, and BHWI. Three additional persons were assisted through the IOM Emergency Direct Assistance Fund (two medical cases and one with accommodation in IFS-EMMAUS based on assessment of vulnerability). In addition, the IOM-supported doctor based on Trebinje assisted 12 adults with medical care and referrals for further medical services (10 male and 1 female). Cases were referred by the Border Police and Service for Foreigners Affairs (SFA) office in Trebinje. During this period, IOM supported the Red Cross of the City of Trebinje to work with the Border Police to address urgent basic needs of migrants arriving at the border. Through its work, IOM mobile teams identified medical vulnerability of persons who were assisted due to harsh weather conditions and prolonged duration of travel, as well as the visible effects of a consistent lack of proper accommodation and regular meals, with children the most effected.



A message repeatedly shown by a family seeking asylum in Bosnia and Herzegovina. M. Shindo-Braaten/UNHCR

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Identification and referral of unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) remains a key challenge for BiH authorities.
- UASC are required by law to have legal guardians appointed who are then authorized to make decisions in their best interest. Proper identification, referral and communication barriers (lack of on available interpreters) can make this challenging in practice.

- In 2017, UNHCR, IOM and UNICEF began work with the SFA in 2017 to improve referral guidelines for vulnerable groups, in particular unaccompanied and separated children. The current increase in arrivals of vulnerable refugees and migrants highlights the need for these referral guidelines to be urgently finalized and adopted.

Education

Achievements and Impact

- Language courses and other educational activities are organized for adults and children residing in the Asylum Centre. Language courses in particular permit asylum seekers to feel more comfortable in their daily interactions and promotes positive relations with the local community.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Families with school-age children have never stayed in the Asylum Centre more than a few weeks. Given the remote location, it would be difficult for school-age children to attend a local school.

Health

Achievements and Impact

- For individuals accommodated in the Asylum Centre, primary health care is provided by the Ministry of Security. For persons outside the Asylum Centre, access to health care is more difficult to access. Both UNHCR and IOM are involved in referral, and in some circumstances, have covered the cost for urgent and lifesaving medical treatment for refugees and migrants in BiH.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- For persons arriving across the mountains from Montenegro in particular to the Trebinje/Bileca area, the journey in harsh winter conditions poses serious health risk. Support to address urgent medical needs upon arrival is needed.

Food Security and Nutrition

Achievements and Impact

- For individuals accommodated in the Asylum Centre, food is provided by the MoS. However, vulnerable refugees and migrants outside of this facility have relied on assistance from civil society, religious institutions and private citizens.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- If numbers of vulnerable refugees and migrants outside of official reception facilities increases, a more organized approach would be required.

Water and Sanitation

Achievements and Impact

- Nothing Significant to Report (“NSTR”).

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- NSTR.

Shelter and NFIs

Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR and IOM have assisted particularly vulnerable refugees and migrants with temporary accommodation
- The Asylum Centre in Trnovo accommodated an average of 70-80 asylum seekers per night during February, which is about half of its full capacity of 154 beds.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Admission to the Asylum Centre is based upon referrals from the Service for Foreigners' Affairs (SFA) and approved by the Asylum Sector. As the Asylum Sector holds regular working hours Monday-Friday, in practice this means that admissions can be delayed.
- Currently asylum seekers who depart the Asylum Centre and BiH, and are later readmitted from Croatia are unable to go back to the Asylum Centre for accommodation.
- Some refugees and migrants who have not been admitted the Asylum Centre for accommodation have received accommodation from local NGOs, individuals and other civil society actors.
- More options are needed for safe accommodation for persons with specific needs (PWSN) including, inter-alia: LGBTI, UASC, single women and families with children.



Camp Coordination and Camp Management

Achievements and Impact

- NSTR.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- NSTR.



Community Empowerment and Self-Reliance

Achievements and Impact

- NSTR.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- NSTR.



Durable Solutions

Achievements and Impact

- NSTR.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- NSTR.

Working in partnership

- The UNCT is working together to jointly assess, and respond to emerging needs. The response is being led by UNHCR in close cooperation with IOM and UNICEF.

Contact: Dorijan Klasnic, Associate Information Management / Public Information Officer, klasnic@unhcr.org, Mobile: 061 479 064

Useful links:

- UNHCR please see: <http://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean>
- IOM please see: <http://migration.iom.int/europe/>
- Media guidelines (ENG): https://issuu.com/unhcrsee/docs/reporting_on_migration_and_refugees
- Media guidelines (B/C/S): https://issuu.com/unhcrsee/docs/reporting_on_migration_and_refugees_d8e9722d9e5cdd
- Asylum Information Brochure: https://issuu.com/unhcrsee/docs/information_for_as_in_bih