

# Bosnia and Herzegovina

**1,781** persons arrived irregularly in January, a decrease by one third compared to the previous month (2,616) but an increase by over three times compared to January 2022 (516). Top three declared countries of origin are Afghanistan (53%), Morocco (10%) and Cuba (10%).\*

**1,143** asylum-seekers and migrants were accommodated in reception facilities at the end of January, while around 170 persons are estimated to be outside of formal accommodation.

Out of total irregular arrivals in January, the Service for Foreigners' Affairs (SFA) issued an "Attestation of Expressed Intent to Seek Asylum" (AISA) to **91%** of them (**1,622** persons).\*

**20** persons registered their asylum claims with the Sector for Asylum (13 cases with majority of persons from the Russian Federation, Türkiye and Ukraine).

All **3** scheduled Refugee Status Determination (RSD) interviews were conducted.

**4** decisions\*\* (4 cases involving 4 persons) were issued, 1 granting subsidiary protection and 3 negative. 3 applications were otherwise closed (1 case involving 3 individuals).

## KEY POPULATION OF CONCERN AT THE END OF JANUARY

**12** people awaiting registration of their asylum claims with the assistance of UNHCR / Vaša Prava BiH

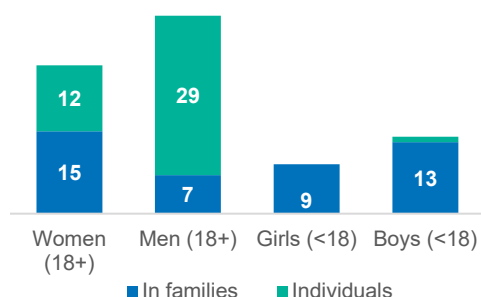
**86** asylum-seekers pending processing and final decision

**147** persons under international protection, of which **45** under refugee status and **102** under subsidiary protection

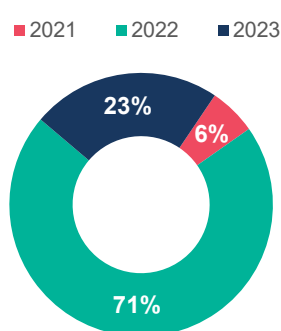
**28** stateless persons and persons at risk of statelessness

## ASYLUM SEEKERS PENDING PROCESSING AND FINAL DECISION AT THE END OF JANUARY

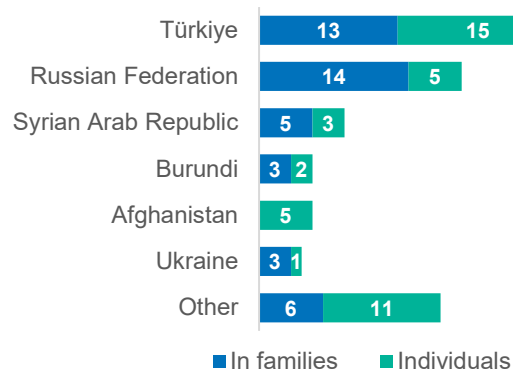
AGE AND GENDER



PER YEAR OF REGISTRATION



TOP-SIX COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN

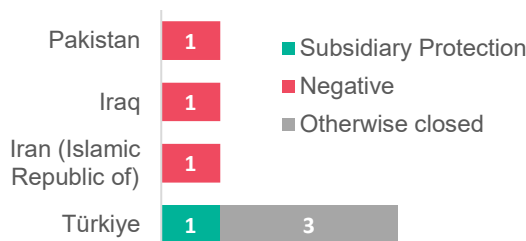


**12** Single adult females

**23** Children, among which **1** unaccompanied or separated child

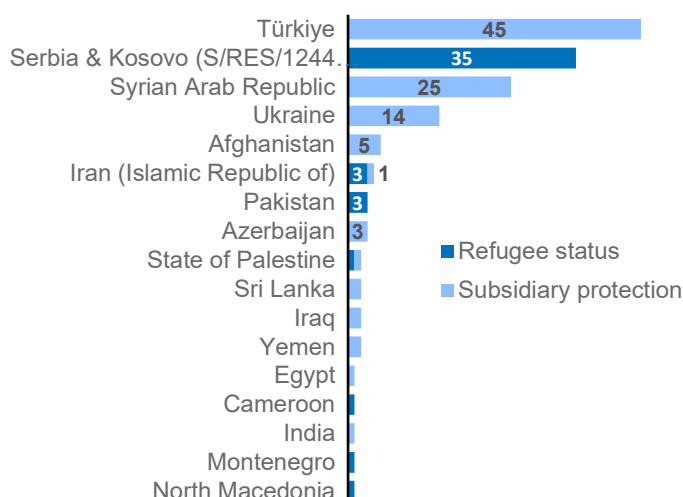
## DECISIONS\*\* IN JANUARY

### PER COUNTRY OF ORIGIN (ALL INSTANCES)



## PERSONS UNDER INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION AT THE END OF JANUARY

### PER COUNTRY OF ORIGIN



\* Data based on weekly statistics from the Ministry of Security.

\*\* Decisions are not necessarily final and binding. Figures refer to the number of persons covered by decisions.

\*\*\* Average processing time (days) from asylum-claim registration to first-instance decision (at case level). Appealed decisions are not included.

\*\*\*\* Waiting time (days) between AISA issuance and asylum-claim registration (at case level), excluding registrations conducted in Immigration Centre or prison.

## NEW TRENDS

In January, an increase in the number of asylum claims submitted by Russian nationals in BiH was noted. Eight persons registered an asylum claim during the month, while it totaled 15 over the whole year 2022. It should also be noted that the number of regular entries from the Russian Federation (RF) doubled between September 2022 and January 2023, which may correlate with the context of the partial military mobilization in the RF. In light of the visa free agreement between BiH and the RF, Russian citizens are legally considered as tourists by the authorities, which raises the issue of their access to information on asylum in BiH.

Another new trend observed in January is the increase in number of AISA delivered to persons from Morocco and Congo (it is unclear whether data refers to the Republic of the Congo or to the Democratic Republic of the Congo). Among the 1,622 persons who were issued this document over the month, Morocco was the second declared country of origin (11%) and Congo the fourth (6%). While irregular arrivals from Congo and issuance of AISA to persons from Congo were already noticeable in 2022, Moroccans were 99 to receive an AISA in 2022 in comparison with 183 who received one in January 2023 alone.

## TOWARDS ENDING STATELESSNESS

Since the start of the #iBelong campaign in 2014, 875 persons obtained documents with support from UNHCR BiH, assisting them in confirming their nationality. As of end of January, there are only 28 stateless persons and persons at risk of statelessness left in BiH. By solving these cases, BiH could become the first country in Europe to end statelessness.

A case of (risk of) statelessness in BiH is considered solved when a person is able to register birth, and/or obtain identity documents enabling the person to be entered in the records of citizens, thus acquiring the nationality of BiH. BiH should resolve remaining issues related to risks of statelessness in law and practice. While BiH has significantly reduced the number of people at risk of statelessness over the years, remaining gaps in law and practice need to be resolved to prevent recurring circumstances which place persons at risk of statelessness. To end statelessness by end of 2024, and prevent new cases from appearing, the authorities of BiH should respect the basic premise that every child must be registered immediately upon birth, without administrative impediments. The authorities must also support vulnerable persons, some of whom are not able to register their address, to obtain identity documents.

### UKRAINIAN NATIONALS STAYING IN BiH: 151 at the end of January

- 12** persons granted subsidiary protection
- 4** asylum-seekers waiting for interview or final decision
- 0** persons issued with an AISA
- 135** persons applied for temporary residence on humanitarian grounds, which allows to stay up to six months but without rights (besides residency)
- 0** persons staying on non-visa regime, which allows to stay for 30 days but without rights

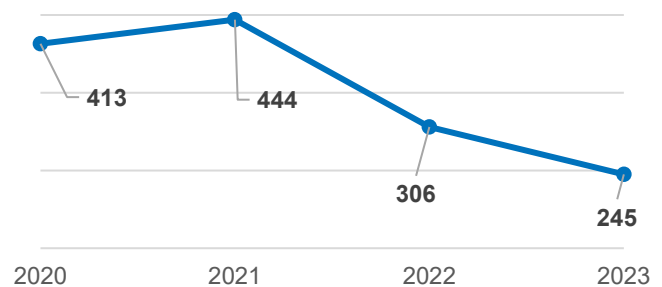
### ASYLUM PROCESSING ACTIVITIES DURING 2020 – 2023

	2020	2021	2022	2023
<i>Applications</i>	245	167	149	20
<i>Refugee** status</i>	1	5	0	0
<i>Subsidiary protection** status</i>	31	28	46	1
<i>Rejected applications**</i>	54	49	28	3
<i>Otherwise closed**</i>	546	184	162	3

### ASYLUM PROCEDURE TIMEFRAME at the end of January

- 38 days**  
Average waiting time to register an asylum claim\*\*\*\* for those claims which were registered in 2023
- 203 days**  
Average time (days) from registration of asylum claim to RSD interview, for RSD interviews held in 2023
- 245 days**  
Average processing time\*\*\* for first-instance decisions issued in 2023

### AVERAGE PROCESSING TIME\*\*\* 2020-2023 at the end of January



\*\* Decisions are not necessarily final and binding.

\*\*\* Average processing time (days) from asylum-claim registration to first-instance decision (at case level). Appealed decisions are not included.

\*\*\*\* Waiting time (days) between AISA issuance and asylum-claim registration date (at case level), excluding registrations conducted in Immigration Centre or prison.

## UPDATE ON ACHIEVEMENTS IN JANUARY

- More than **350** persons were provided with information related to asylum in BiH
- Some **100** persons were assisted with free legal aid related to asylum in BiH
- Some **200** persons were assisted with psychosocial support
- 78** sessions in social/recreational and occupational therapy activities were organized
- 1** strategic / priority case of IDPs and returnees resolved
- Increased interest in local language classes was noted with 25 persons nearing the end of their Bosnian language course level at the Polyglot School in Sarajevo.
- As part of UNHCR's partner the Bosnia and Herzegovina Women's Initiative (BHWI) occupational therapy activities, women from Turkey and Sri Lanka completed a five-day sewing workshop in Sarajevo. Participants showed high satisfaction, emphasizing that acquiring new skills increased their self-confidence and improved their self-image.
- Ukrainian refugees residing in the Sarajevo area received winter clothes and shoes.



Provision of information by UNHCR's partner Vaša prava BiH at the Temporary Reception Centre Blažuj gate, Sarajevo area



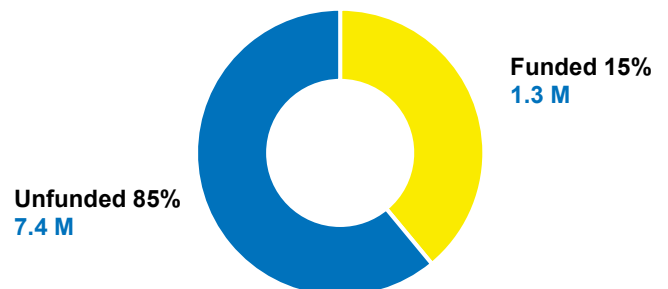
UNHCR Representative, Lucie Gagné, at the closing event of the joint IOM – UNHCR project "BiH: Enhancing social cohesion in communities hosting people on the move"

## NEWS & EVENTS

- The closing event of the EU co-funded project "Bosnia and Herzegovina: Enhancing social cohesion in communities hosting people on the move", implemented jointly with IOM, took place on **19 January in Sarajevo** and on **26 January in Bihać**. Project activities were mainly implemented in local communities for the organization of cultural and sports events, creative and educational workshops, among others. These initiatives contributed to fostering closeness and better understanding between migrants, asylum-seekers, refugees, and the communities in which they live.
- The Una-Sana Canton has been particularly affected by heavy rainfalls that caused flooding. To support cantonal and municipal capacities, UNHCR delivered 25 dehumidifiers. This donation is part of UNHCR's social cohesion activities in local communities hosting refugees and asylum-seekers that can benefit both local communities and people forced to flee ([Facebook post](#)).

## FUNDING UPDATE

Financial requirements: **USD 8.7 million**



UNHCR BiH is grateful for the support of its 2023 donors:  
[European Union](#)

To implement its 2023 programme, UNHCR cooperates with [government partners](#), the Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees, the Ministry of Security, and the Service for Foreigners' Affairs, as well as [NGO partners](#), the Bosnia and Herzegovina Women's Initiative, the Catholic Relief Services and Vaša prava BiH.