



BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

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

1 January to 16 February 2018

HIGHLIGHTS

- On 20 February 2018, editors and other professionals from over 20 national and international media outlets were sensitized about the current refugee/migrant situation in BiH, and how to report on the situation in line with international norms and definitions. **Media guidelines** for reporting in such a context were shared by UNHCR and IOM.



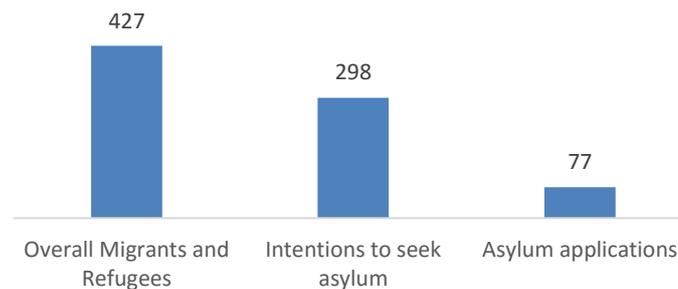
On the left: Neven Crvenkovic, UNHCR Regional Spokesman, Anne-Christine Eriksson, UNHCR Regional Representative/Representative for BiH, Peter Van der Auweraert, IOM Representative for BiH

- On 14 February 2018, the BiH Ministry of Security, with the support of International Organization for Migration (IOM), initiated **coordinated discussion between international institutions and national agencies about migration management** in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The inter-agency meeting provided an overview of activities and future priorities in migration management, in particular for the provision of support towards implementation of relevant action plans.

The photographer: Mustafa Ozturk

Population of concern

A total of **427** people of concern



KEY FIGURES

4

Unaccompanied minors assisted

118

Assisted with transport, food, NFI and psychosocial counselling

77

Asylum applications

298

Intentions to seek asylum

48

Assisted at the UNHCR Information Center

125

People provided with legal counselling

PRIORITIES

- Continue supporting BiH authorities at all levels respond to existing and emerging needs
- Hold meeting with civil society and NGOs actors
- UNCT to lead joint rapid assessment of needs in Sarajevo and other locations
- Improve referral mechanism for UASC to ensure guardianship

UPDATE ON ACHIEVEMENTS

Operational Context

During the second half of 2017, BiH experienced a significant increase in refugees and migrants, most of whom crossed the border in an irregular manner (i.e. at non-official border crossing points). During the summer, most of the arrivals were via Serbia, whereas at the very end of the year, the majority of arrivals were from Montenegro. In 2018, arrivals have continued, which temporarily exceeded BiH accommodation capacity in January. Currently, while the asylum centre, 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. BiH has a [Migration Coordination Body](#) led by the Ministry of Security. This body 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 in Trnovo (managed by MoS), and the Refugee Reception Centre in Salakovac (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 125 persons in need of international protection in 2018.
- IOM has two mobile teams active since June 2017. In 2017 they assisted 283 migrants and refugees (181 adult men; 21 adult women; 66 minor boys; and 15 minor girls). Since the beginning of 2018, IOM mobile teams have provided transport, and addressed urgent needs of vulnerable migrants (food, shelter, clothing) for 43 migrants and refugees (21 adult men; 8 adult women; 11 minor boys and 3 minor girls).



Asylum Center in Trnovo

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.
- UNHCR, IOM and UNICEF began work with the Service for Foreigners' Affairs 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 aged children have never stayed in the centre more than a few weeks. Given the remote location, it would be difficult for school aged children to attend a local school.



BHWI language course



Health

Achievements and Impact

- Both UNHCR and IOM are involved in referral, and in some circumstances, have covered the cost for urgent medical needs for refugees and migrants in BiH. In some cases this has been lifesaving treatment.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- For persons arriving across the mountains from Montenegro to the Trebinje/Bileca area in particular, 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 Ministry of Security. 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.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Nothing Significant To Report.



Shelter and NFIs

Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR and IOM have assisted particularly vulnerable refugees and migrants including a group of four unaccompanied and minor children with temporary accommodation in a shelter.
- The asylum centre provides accommodation for persons seeking asylum with a capacity of 154 beds.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Admission to the asylum centre is based upon referrals from the Service for Foreigners' Affairs. As the Sector for Asylum does not work 24/7, or on weekends, in practice this means that admissions can be delayed, and no alternative is provided.
- 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.
- There are no alternatives for refugees and migrants who are unable or unwilling to approach the asylum centre for accommodation.
- More options 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.



Logistics

Achievements and Impact

- NSTR.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- NSTR.

Working in partnership

- The United Nations Country Team 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.

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Links:

www.unct.ba

For more information from UNHCR please see: <http://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean>

For more information from IOM please see: <http://migration.iom.int/europe/>