

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH)

1,598 persons arrived irregularly in February, which is almost 50% less than in the previous month.¹

Top three declared countries of origin are the Syrian Arab Republic (37%), Afghanistan (17%) and Morocco (10%).¹

78% of them were issued an “Attestation on Intention to Seek Asylum” (AISA).¹

2,125 asylum-seekers, refugees and migrants were accommodated in reception facilities at the end of the month.

The Sector for Asylum of the Ministry of Security (MoS) registered the asylum claims of **34** persons and conducted **3** Refugee Status Determination (RSD) interviews.

6 decisions were issued, 2 granting subsidiary protection and 4 negative. 4 applications were terminated.²

SELECTED POPULATION DATA AT THE END OF FEBRUARY

53 persons who are represented by UNHCR/Vaša prava BiH waiting for the registration of their asylum claim

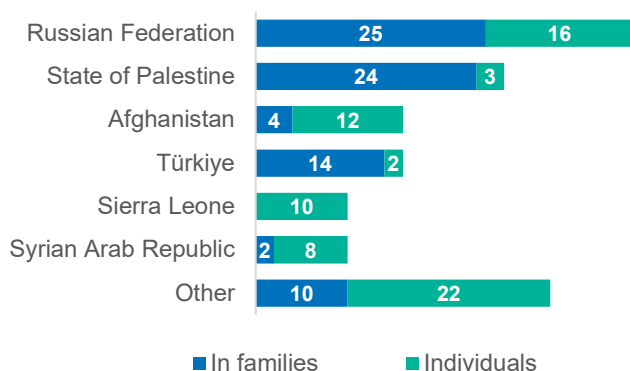
152 asylum-seekers with claims pending processing and final decision

191 persons under international protection, of whom **44** with refugee status and **147** under subsidiary protection

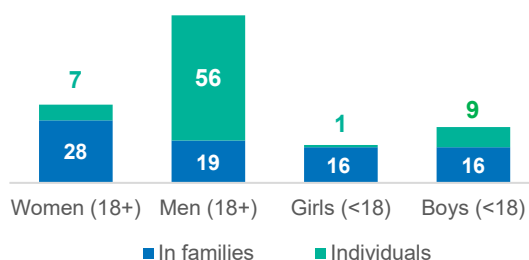
22 stateless persons and persons at risk of statelessness

ASYLUM-SEEKERS AT THE END OF FEBRUARY

TOP-SIX COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN



AGE AND GENDER

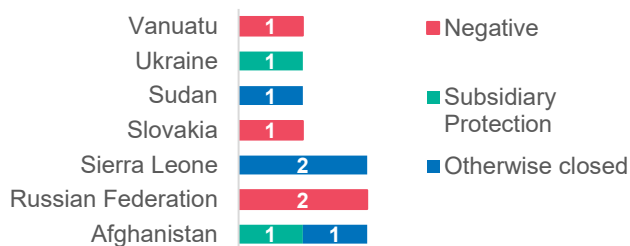


7 single adult females

42 children, among which **10** unaccompanied or separated children

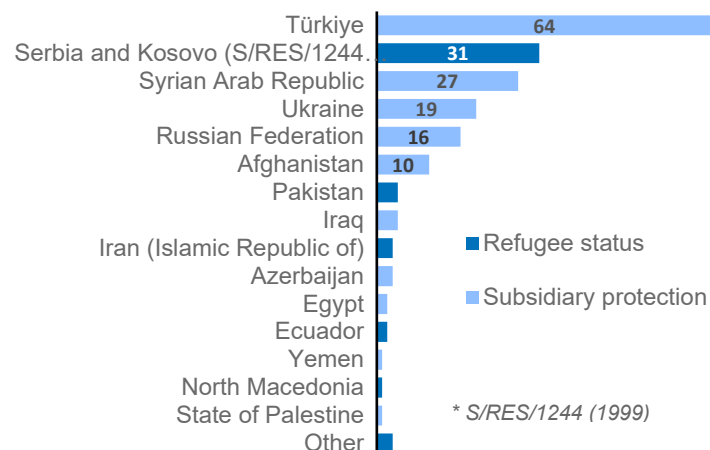
DECISIONS² IN FEBRUARY

PER COUNTRY OF ORIGIN (ALL INSTANCES)



PERSONS UNDER INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION AT THE END OF FEBRUARY

TOP-FIFTEEN COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN



* S/RES/1244 (1999)

¹ Data based on weekly statistics from the Ministry of Security.

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

TWO-YEAR MARK OF THE RUSSIAN INVASION OF UKRAINE

Two years after the Russian full-scale invasion, almost 6.5 million refugees from Ukraine remain scattered around the world and nearly 4 million people are internally displaced within Ukraine. There are 223 Ukrainian refugees residing in BiH, most of them generously hosted by the communities in Čitluk and Međugorje. Since their arrival, UNHCR has been coordinating activities with the Red Cross and other actors, ensuring an effective and timely assistance.

However, an appropriate response by the BiH authorities related to their status in the country is still pending. So far, unlike most EU Member States and several countries in the region, the BiH authorities did not grant “Temporary Protection” status to Ukrainians fleeing the war. Instead, the BiH authorities facilitated the entry and residence of Ukrainian citizens in BiH “on humanitarian grounds”, granting them a status that does not offer access to any basic rights (health, education, work, etc). This status also does not allow them to legally access the labour market and become self-sustainable, leaving them dependent on humanitarian aid.

Considering the prolonged situation of uncertainty and the need for adequate protection of Ukrainian refugees, EU Member States extended the Temporary Protection Directive. Similar protection should be provided in BiH and the Ministry of Security should initiate the request to the Council of Ministers of BiH for its adoption. UNHCR believes that by taking the right decisions, BiH, with assistance from key national and international organizations, can offer adequate assistance and ensure that vulnerable Ukrainians can enjoy full protection, and are not compelled to initiate further journey to safety, being exposed to numerous risks.

UKRAINIAN NATIONALS WHO ARRIVED AFTER 24 FEBRUARY 2022 STAYING IN BiH: 223 at the end of February

18 persons granted subsidiary protection

7 asylum-seekers waiting for interview or final decision

198 persons applied for temporary residence on humanitarian grounds, which allows to stay up to six months, but without rights (besides residency)

OVERVIEW OF ASYLUM PROCESSING FROM 2022 – 2024

	2022	2023	2024
Applications	149	147	64
Refugee status ²	0	4	0
Subsidiary protection status ²	46	63	8
Rejected applications ²	26	11	4
Procedure terminated ²	162	41	6

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

ASYLUM PROCEDURE TIMEFRAME at the end of February

64 days

Average waiting time between AISA issuance and asylum-claim registration, for claims registered in 2024 (at case level), excluding registrations conducted in Immigration Centre or prison. However, the AISA is only valid up to 14 days.

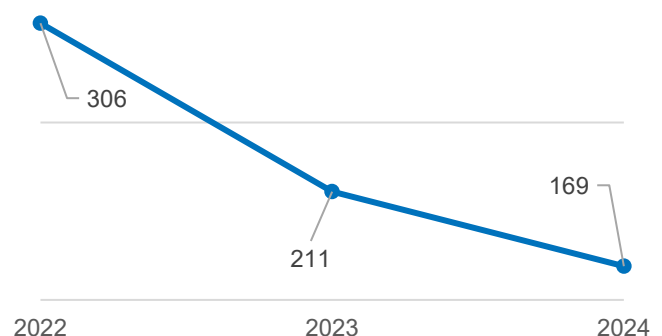
153 days

Average time from registration of asylum claim to RSD interview (at case level), for RSD interviews held in 2024.

169 days (over five months)

Average processing time from asylum-claim registration to first-instance decisions issued in 2024 (at case level). Appealed decisions are not included. Processing time as per the Law on Asylum should be up to six months, and exceptionally up to 18 months.

AVERAGE PROCESSING TIME 2022-2024 at the end of February



ACHIEVEMENTS IN FEBRUARY

Data provided based on information available to date.

- **294** persons provided with legal information on asylum in BiH through individual and group counselling
- **139** persons assisted with free legal aid in asylum-related cases
- **137** persons assisted with psychosocial support
- **61** persons attended local language classes as part of their integration path
- A new semester of B/C/S language course started in Sarajevo and for the first time in Mostar. Attendance continues to increase with 61 asylum-seekers and refugees enrolled. Learning the local language is a key step of the integration journey and UNHCR also intends to organize such classes for TRC Lipa residents.
- Increased interest in the asylum procedure in BiH continues with 34 applications registered in February (mostly from Palestinian, Russian and Syrian nationals), which is the highest recorded in a month since October 2021. UNHCR commends the efforts by the MoS to conduct timely registrations and encourages to keep up with fast processing.



Thanks to free legal aid by *Vaša prava BiH (VP)*, a couple from Türkiye under international protection got married in BiH @VP



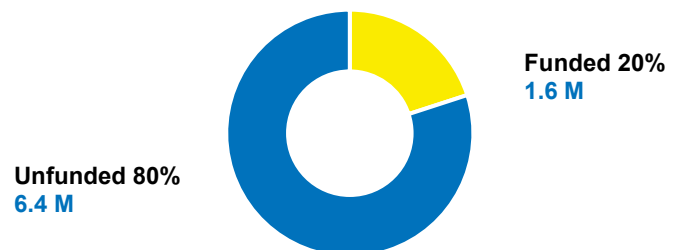
Seven-year-old refugee boy from Ukraine and his Bosnian dance partner won a silver medal at a tournament in Zenica @BHWI

NEWS & EVENTS

- A joint **Op-Ed on statelessness** by Ingrid Macdonald, UN Resident Coordinator, and Lucie Gagné, UNHCR Representative, was published in the Sarajevo-based “Oslobodjenje” daily. With timely actions and political will, BiH could be the first country in Europe that has resolved all known cases of statelessness. There are currently only 22 known cases of stateless people remaining in the country.
- From 13-15 February, UNHCR’s Representative Lucie Gagné visited Bihać, capital of the Una-Sana Canton (USC) that hosts two Temporary Reception Centres, and which has over the years demonstrated excellent cooperation with UNHCR. During her visit, Ms. Gagné vowed UNHCR support to social cohesion activities in the USC including through the purchase of equipment for a sports stadium, seven schools and two faculties (including three schools attended by asylum-seeking and refugee students), and for two playgrounds. The local Red Cross also received equipment for first-aid education of citizens and interventions in the community.

FUNDING UPDATE

Financial requirements: **USD 8.0 million**



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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 2024 programme.
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