

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH)

1,993 persons arrived irregularly in March, which is 25% more than in the previous month.¹

Top three declared countries of origin are the Syrian Arab Republic (44%), Afghanistan (13%) and Türkiye (9%).¹

84% of them were issued an “Attestation on Intention to Seek Asylum” (AISA).¹

2,136 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 **11** persons and conducted **8** Refugee Status Determination (RSD) interviews.

10 decisions were issued, all granting subsidiary protection. One application was suspended/terminated.²

SELECTED POPULATION DATA AT THE END OF MARCH

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

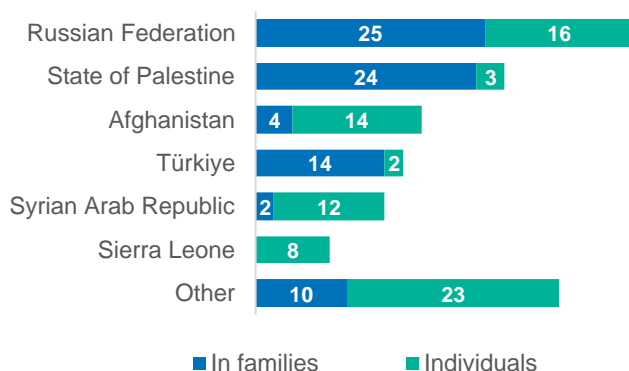
157 asylum-seekers with claims pending processing and final decision

190 persons under international protection, of whom **44** with refugee status and **146** under subsidiary protection

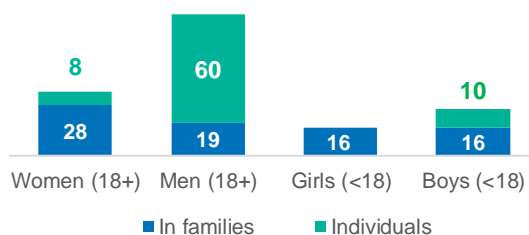
22 stateless persons and persons at risk of statelessness

ASYLUM-SEEKERS AT THE END OF MARCH

TOP-SIX COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN



AGE AND GENDER

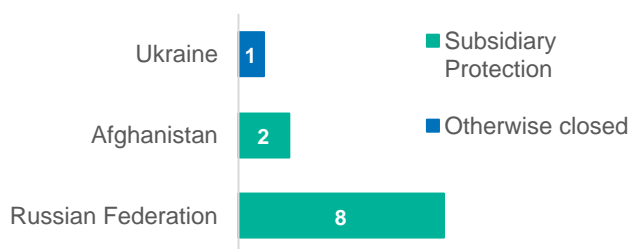


8 single adult females

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

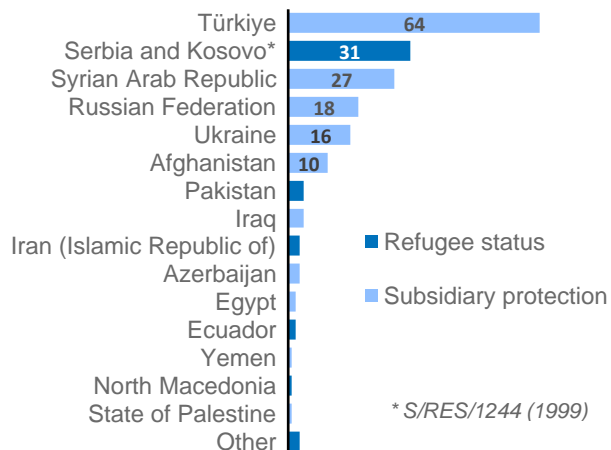
DECISIONS² IN MARCH

PER COUNTRY OF ORIGIN (ALL INSTANCES)



PERSONS UNDER INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION AT THE END OF MARCH

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.

TOWARDS A MORE INCLUSIVE FREE LEGAL AID SYSTEM

The Una-Sana Canton (USC) introduced changes to its Law on Free Legal Aid, enabling, among others, asylum-seekers, persons under international protection, stateless people and people at risk of statelessness to benefit from it. UNHCR and its partner Vaša Prava BiH had submitted proposed amendments, which were retained in the revised Law, and then published in the USC Official Gazette in March 2024. This is a positive example, as the public legal aid system in BiH is only partially established and, in the majority of cases, forcibly displaced and stateless people are not covered or lack effective access. UNHCR and Vaša Prava BiH also drafted an initiative for the harmonization of the free legal aid legislation aiming at the inclusion of all forcibly displaced and stateless people country-wide (there are currently 13 existing legislations at different levels), and to harmonize access conditions and scope. The initiative was submitted to Ministries of Justice at all levels and government-funded Free Legal Aid Offices.

UPDATE ON THE ASYLUM SITUATION

There was an increase in asylum claim registrations in the first quarter of 2024. A total of 75 persons had their claims registered by the authorities, which is an increase by 80% compared with the same period last year. In addition to the existing trend of applications from Russian nationals, since 2023, authorities registered claims from Palestinians evacuated from Gaza, as well as claims from Syrians and citizens of Sierra Leone. There are currently 157 asylum-seekers with their claims pending processing and final decision, which is the highest number since 2021. This increase in the number of applications to process is a challenge for BiH authorities, which have made significant efforts to conduct registrations at a steady pace. In this context, scheduling interviews and taking decisions are crucial. UNHCR considers that for manifestly well-founded claims, the authorities should implement accelerated or simplified procedures to reduce the overall length of the procedure and the workload on the MoS' Sector for Asylum staff.

UKRAINIAN NATIONALS WHO ARRIVED AFTER 24 FEBRUARY 2022 STAYING IN BiH: 219 at the end of March

15 persons granted subsidiary protection

6 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	75
Refugee status ²	0	4	0
Subsidiary protection status ²	46	63	18
Rejected applications ²	26	11	4
Procedure terminated ²	162	41	7

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

ASYLUM PROCEDURE TIMEFRAME at the end of March

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.

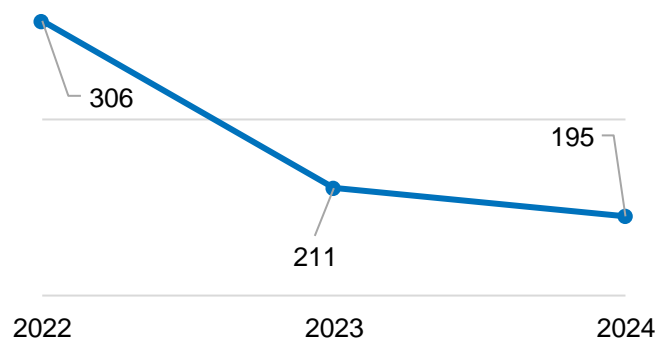
191 days

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

195 days (over six months processing time)

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 March



ACHIEVEMENTS IN MARCH

Data provided based on information available to date.

- **343** persons provided with legal information on asylum in BiH through individual and group counselling
- **106** persons assisted with free legal aid in asylum-related cases
- **169** persons assisted with psychosocial support
- **62** persons attended local language classes as part of their integration path
- Signature of a Memorandum of Understanding to promote refugee law in BiH through Refugee Law Clinics
- Individual and group social, recreational, and occupational activities are organized to boost the mental health of forcibly displaced people and further develop their life skills. In March, 132 sessions were held, including cooking, art, and sports activities. For example, a 19-year-old resident of TRC Blažuj from Guinea participated in a football league in Sarajevo. With support from UNHCR's partner Bosnia and Herzegovina Women's Initiative (BHWI), he had joined a local football club and trains there regularly. This is a successful example of pro-active integration, contributing to an effective inclusion into the local community.



Signature of a Memorandum of Understanding to promote refugee law in BiH through Refugee Law Clinics @UNHCR



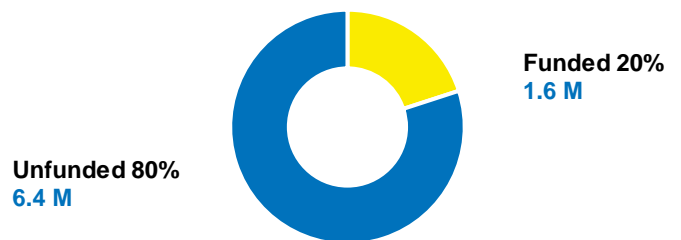
Joint information session on asylum, international protection and voluntary return in TRC Borići @Vaša prava BiH

NEWS & EVENTS

- UNHCR, the Ministry of Security, the Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees, the Law Faculties of the Universities of Sarajevo and East Sarajevo, and UNHCR's legal partner Vaša Prava BiH, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to promote refugee law in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This partnership will support the development of theoretical and practical capacities of future lawyers in this field. The MoU runs until end of 2025, defining cooperation on the organization and management of the Refugee Law Clinic, support for the library of the Law Faculties, and collaboration in the exchange of information on policies and practices. The Refugee Law Clinic shall enable students to acquire theoretical and practical knowledge and experience in the field of refugee law, regarding international legal framework for refugee protection and on the relevant acquis of the European Union in this area. Read more in the [press release](#).

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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