



Situation Room – Horizon Series

**** BALKAN MIGRATION HORIZON: BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA ****

Period under review: from January 2021 to 17 May 2021.

[This report is based on publicly available sources to describe a changing situation. Information subject to change.]

Situation analysis recap:

- There are currently 6,734 refugees and migrants in Bosnia and Herzegovina. 4,991 asylum-seekers and migrants were accommodated in reception facilities at the end of March, while 1,500-2,500 persons are estimated to be squatting outside of formal accommodation, mostly in the Una-Sana Canton. There are only 5 temporary reception centres that are fully operational. Camps provide basic needs such as shelter, water, sanitation, hygiene, food and nutrition, outreach activities and safety/security.
- It is estimated that Afghanistan (42% of all people) and Pakistan (29%) are the two nationalities with the highest number of persons living outside of organised camps. Other nationalities include Morocco, Algeria, Iran, Iraq, Papua New Guinea, Syria, Palestine, Somalia, and Sudan.
- Intended destinations for migrants trying to leave are Italy (38%), followed by France (20%), Germany (20%), Belgium (10%), and Switzerland (4%).
- The latest report, published in March, counted 2,712 new arrivals in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) since January. Of those, 1,269 new migrants and asylum-seekers arrived in March, which represents a 64% increase in total number of new arrivals over the previous month (and the highest number since October 2020).
- 1,172 out of 1,269 (92%) persons arriving in March expressed an intention to seek asylum with the Service for Foreigners' Affairs. Only 8 Refugee Status Determination interviews were conducted, where only one decision was issued, which denied refugee status. 5 asylum claims were suspended during the same period. Furthermore, 10 asylum claims were registered with the Sector for Asylum in March out of 47 scheduled.
- The United Nations (UN) field teams in BiH expressed concerns over reports of violent pushback of migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees back into BiH from the neighbouring countries. In the case of one group, while crossing the border with Croatia, they had been deprived of their belongings, including their mobile phones and money, and been beaten with wooden sticks while forcibly returned to the territory of BiH.
- The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) is warning of the risks of trafficking faced by asylum-seekers and migrants transiting through Bosnia and Herzegovina. The country is facing a huge migrant smuggling problem. Many criminal entities, even transnational criminal organizations, have gotten involved in human trafficking because of the potential wealth it brings in. It is estimated that the migrant smuggling business alone could be worth up to €50 million per year in the region.
- Access to healthcare for refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, including COVID-19 testing and treatment, remains a critical priority. Many humanitarian nongovernmental organizations called for urgent vaccination of refugees and undocumented migrants.
- In January, the European Commission gave an additional €3.5 million in humanitarian aid to help vulnerable refugees and migrants that are facing a humanitarian disaster.

Sources/Further Reading:

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