

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH)

September 2021

The total number of **arrivals** of asylum-seekers, refugees, and migrants since January 2021 is **12,530**, representing a decrease compared to the same period in 2020 (12,579), and 2019 (19,973).

Within the context of mixed movements, UNHCR supports authorities to enhance their capacity **to identify and refer people in need of international protection** including those with vulnerabilities to registration and asylum processes.

Following up on the Global Refugee Forum pledge to **enhance integration as a solution for refugees**, UNHCR is working with authorities to help develop a bylaw on integration addressing current gaps in the legal framework.

POPULATION OF CONCERN*

Refugees	5,257
Asylum-seekers	256
Internally displaced persons	96,305
Stateless persons	65
Other persons of concern	7,645

TOP THREE COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN*

Refugees	Asylum-seekers
Croatia 5,112	Turkey 44
Serbia and Kosovo: S/RES/1244 (1999) 54	Iraq 37
Turkey 33	Afghanist. 33

*Data source: UNHCR 2020 Global Trends Report and UNHCR [data finder platform](#)

COVID-19 PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

Direct assistance: Given the disproportionate negative impact of COVID-19 on persons of concern, UNHCR directly supports vulnerable persons with protection-sensitive accommodation, food and hygiene parcels and ICT equipment for online schooling. UNHCR also supports the BiH authorities in mitigating challenges to the asylum processes due to the pandemic.

Inclusion of PoC: In August, COVID-19 vaccination campaign started in reception centres for migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees in Una-Sana Canton. It will soon be available in reception centres in Sarajevo and Herzegovina-Neretva Cantons. UNHCR has been supporting the vaccination of PoCs residing in private accommodation in Sarajevo Canton.

Communication with Communities: UNHCR and partners work to support two-way information exchange through information leaflets, including child-friendly info, the HELP website, peer-to-peer educators, focus group discussions and a call centre.

HIGHLIGHTS

187 asylum claims pending decision

at the end of August 2021. For first-instance decisions issued in 2021, the average processing time was 450 days.

71 registrations of asylum claims

were pending at the end of August 2021.

390 days on average

was the waiting time between the registration of an asylum claim and the Refugee Status Determination (RSD) interview for interviews conducted from January to August 2021

Statelessness

810 cases of persons at risk of statelessness have been resolved by UNHCR and partners since the start of the #IBelong campaign in 2014. 149 persons at risk of statelessness and 3 stateless persons have received legal assistance from UNHCR and partners by end August 2021.



Call Centre to improve access to legal aid

UNHCR/Vaša prava launched a 24/7 free counseling line to facilitate access to information and legal counsel for asylum-seekers. PHOTO: UNHCR

Key Priorities

- **Access to Asylum:** UNHCR works to improve access to asylum and to enhance the quality of the asylum procedure through the regional roll-out of the Quality Assurance Initiative. UNHCR provides capacity-building and support to the Ministry of Security (staffing and training and strategic support in the working group for the new Migration and Asylum Strategy).
- **Solutions:** In support of BiH's GRF pledges, UNHCR assists the Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees to enhance durable solutions for refugees, persons granted subsidiary protection, and beneficiaries of the Regional Housing Programme.
- **IDPs:** The office remains engaged in supporting the realisation of Annex VII Dayton Peace Agreement with legal support for access to rights for a selected group of internally displaced persons in addition to a role in the Regional Housing Programme, which provides reconstruction assistance and social housing for vulnerable returnees and IDPs.

Working with Partners

- UNHCR works with the Ministry of Security, the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees and judiciary on asylum, international protection and integration. UNHCR supports the Service for Foreigners' Affairs to enhance their first-line response capacity to collect quality information and identify persons with international protection needs or vulnerabilities. UNHCR trains authorities on asylum processing and reception centre management.
- UNHCR supports free legal aid, psycho-social support, community-based protection and protection mainstreaming, inside and outside reception centres in partnership with BiH Women's Initiatives and Vaša Prava BiH. These partnerships ensure the provision of protection services during the asylum processes. UNHCR is establishing a new partnership with the

INGO Catholic Relief Services that is focused on effective integration of refugees and persons with subsidiary protection.

- UNHCR, and IOM lead in the UN/inter-agency response to the mixed movements. UNHCR supports the overall coordination, including protection referral for those in need of international protection, as well as information management. UNHCR also collaborates with other UN agencies in the realization of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.
- **External Engagement:** UNHCR works to improve protection for persons of concern by stimulating public awareness and donor interest and contributes to joint messaging on human rights with the UNCT and other actors, including the EU, aimed at improving the asylum system and access to rights to persons of concern to UNHCR.

Statelessness

- BiH is a party to both Statelessness Conventions. It has no statelessness determination procedure in place. However, concerned persons may access temporary residence on humanitarian grounds, in the asylum procedure and in the procedure to revise BiH citizenship. BiH authorities pledged during the High-Level Segment in 2019 to improve birth registration of all children regardless of the status of their parents through enhanced legislation and practice, which is partially achieved through amended Law on Extrajudicial Procedure in Federation BiH while realising other BiH pledges is still pending.

UNHCR Presence in BiH

Staff:

26 National Staff
 5 International Staff
 5 affiliated staff
 1 IUNV
 1 JPO
 1 intern

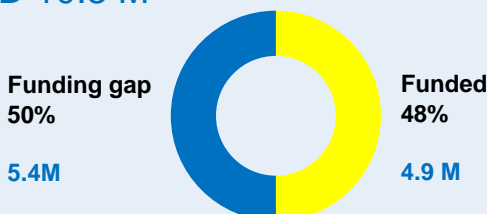
Offices:

1 Country Office in Sarajevo
 1 Field Unit in Bihać
 1 Field Unit in Tuzla

Financial information (28 September 2021)

Financial requirements

USD 10.3 M



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