

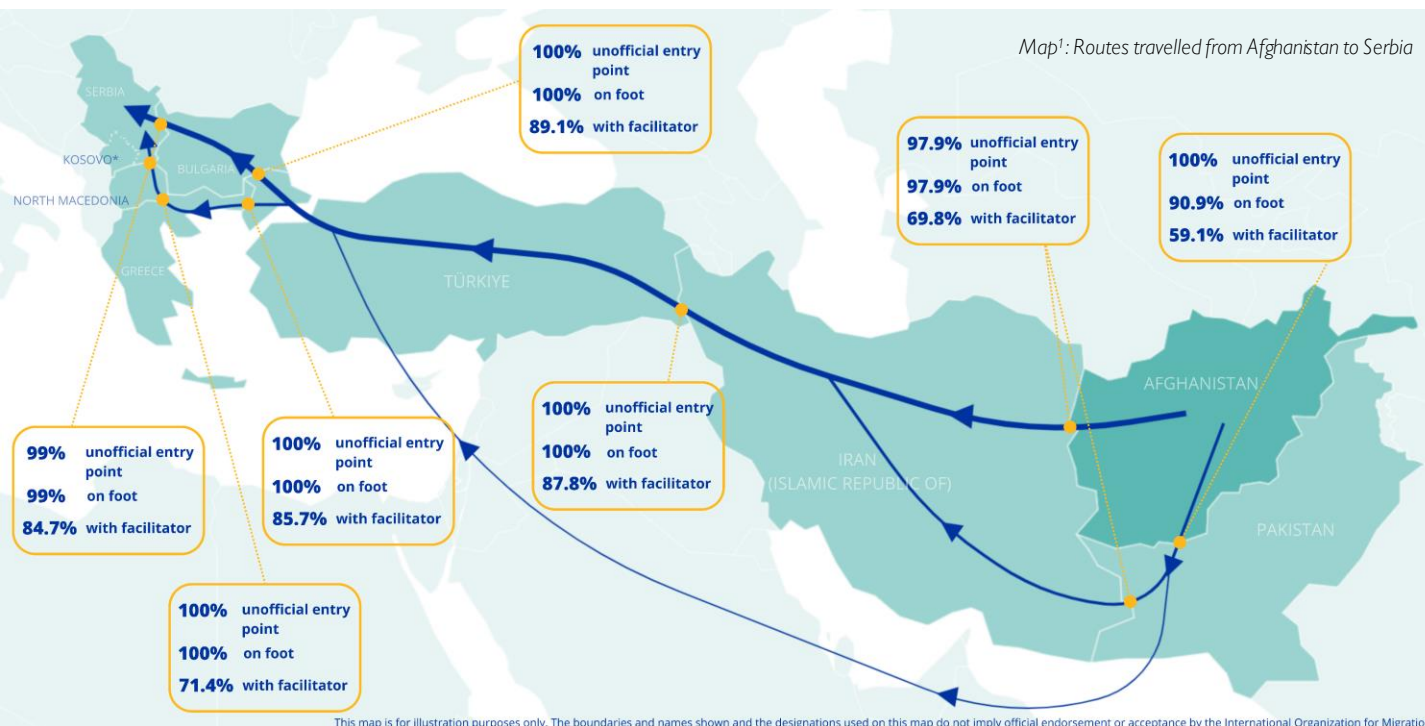
3 reception centres in Serbia

- Obrenovac
- Preševo
- Adaševci

100
Afghans
interviewed

44,859 Afghans
registered by Serbian
authorities in 2022

IOM, together with the Serbian Commissariat for Refugees and Migration (KIRS), carried out a customized survey of Afghan nationals in Serbia from 23 March to 4 April 2023. IOM interviewed 100 Afghan nationals in three reception facilities across Serbia to better understand their demographic profiles as well as migration drivers and onward intentions.



Since the Taliban takeover in 2021, Afghan nationals have constituted the top nationality among all arrivals in the Western Balkans. Serbia is the main transit hub for Afghan nationals transiting through the Western Balkans. In 2022, KIRS registered 44,859 Afghan nationals in Serbia, an increase of 134% from 2021.

KEY FINDINGS

- All the people interviewed were men
- Most respondents (75%) were under the age of 25
- Over three-quarters (76%) were single, while 22 per cent were married
- Almost all traveled in non-family groups
- 60 per cent come from Kabul and Nangarhar
- Most respondents (81%) mentioned war and conflict as their primary reason for leaving Afghanistan
- On average, respondents spent 44 days in transit countries with the most time (140 days) spent in the Republic of Türkiye
- Out of all border crossings made from Afghanistan to Serbia, 81 per cent were facilitated
- Almost all (92%) of respondents entered Serbia through Bulgaria
- Most respondents (75%) paid between 5,000 to 10,000 USD for their journeys from Afghanistan to Serbia
- The most frequently cited intended countries of destination were Germany (57%), France (16%), and Belgium (12%)
- Eight per cent of respondents stated they worked or performed other activities without getting the expected payment
- Twelve per cent were kept at a certain location against their will by persons other than the authorities of the country
- One quarter of the sample experienced some form of physical violence along their journey

1. Maps are for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM.

* References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

Profiles

The majority (85%) of the survey sample consisted of adult men under the age of 30. Over three-quarters of the sample (76%) were single. All of the respondents had completed formal education in Afghanistan prior to departing, with most respondents noting that primary school was the highest completed level.

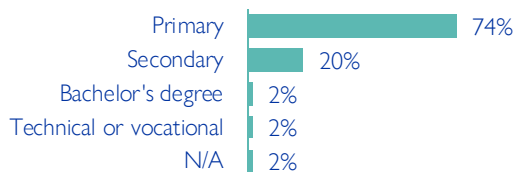
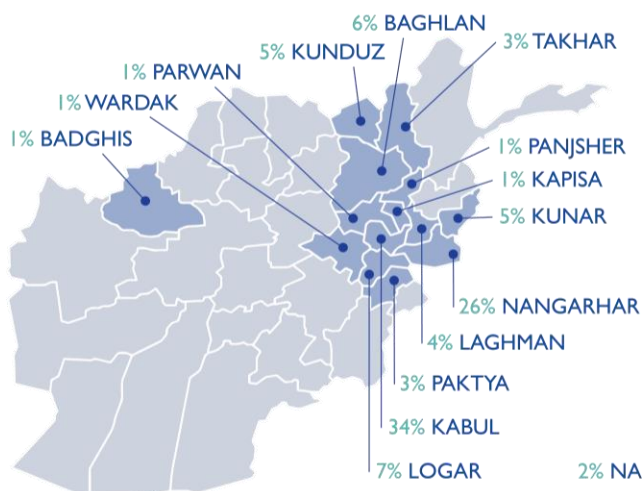


Figure 1: Highest level of educational attainment

The main provinces of origin in Afghanistan were Kabul and Nangarhar, a province located in the east of the country, which has seen [significant displacement flows](#).



Map²: Province of origin Afghanistan

The most frequently cited reasons for leaving Afghanistan were war and conflict and economic reasons. Several respondents reported that they or a close family member had worked for the US military or that they had previously been in the Afghan armed forces.

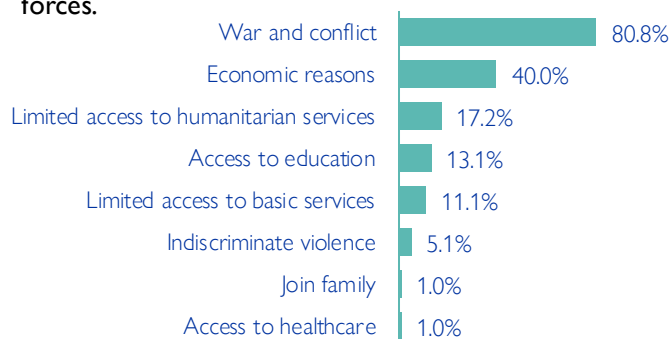


Figure 2: Drivers of migration (multiple answers possible)

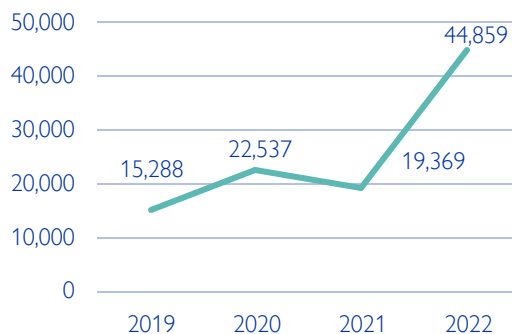


Figure 3: Registration of Afghan nationals in Serbia, 2019 – 2022

Journeys

Almost all of the respondents (95%) stated they were travelling in non-family groups.

The top five intended destination countries were Italy, France, Spain, Germany and Portugal. Most respondents reported that they had chosen these destination countries because of perceived ease of access to asylum, appealing socio-economic conditions or because of the presence of family and established diaspora networks in those countries.

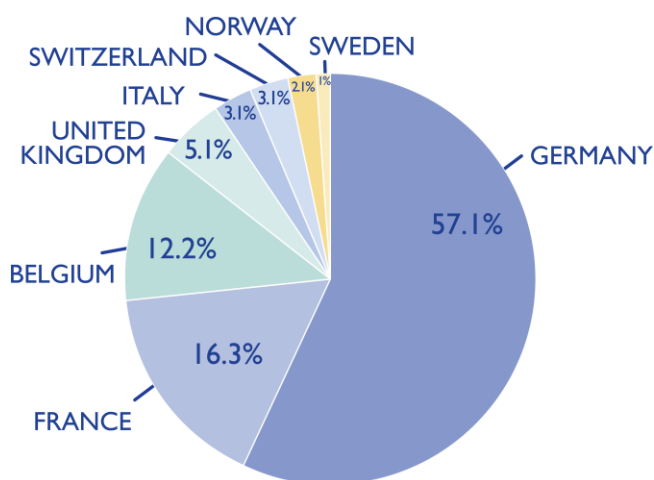


Figure 4: Intended country of destination

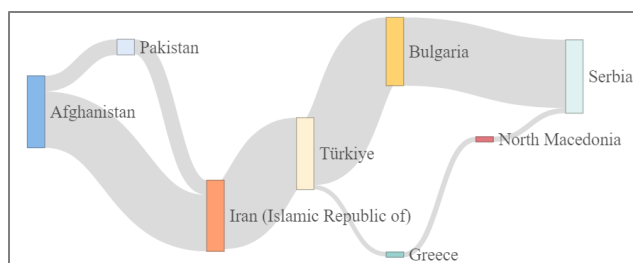


Figure 5: Routes travelled from Afghanistan to Serbia

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Journeys

The majority of the population sample were recent arrivals in Serbia with half of the respondents having left six months prior to the interview. The vast majority (92%) of the respondents had entered Serbia through Bulgaria. The eight per cent of respondents who had entered through the Greece - North Macedonia route had all been residing in Serbia significantly longer than those who entered Bulgaria, as shown in Figure 4 below. This indicates that the Bulgaria route is increasingly active, which may be due to more effective mobility by migrants in the region, better organized migrant smuggling facilitators. By comparison, in a survey carried out in the summer and fall of 2022 with 285 Afghan nationals in the Western Balkans, only 15 per cent entered through Bulgaria.

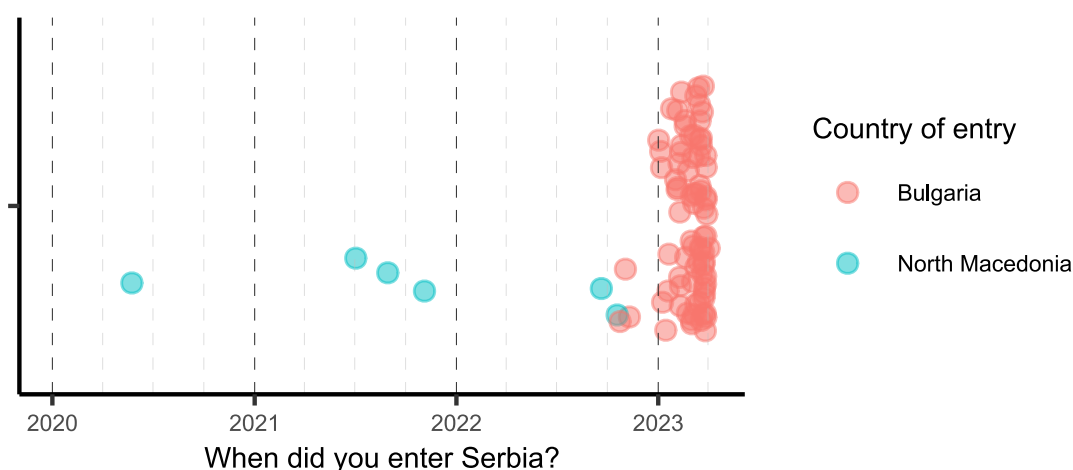


Figure 6: Individual respondents: date of entry and country of entry to Serbia

Experiences of violence, exploitation and abuse

Almost one-third (32%) of the respondents stated that they had experienced some form of physical violence on their way to Serbia. The majority of these experiences happened in Bulgaria and the Republic of Türkiye.

Twelve per cent of respondents stated that they had been held at a specific location against their will by persons other than official authorities. This mostly relates to people being held by smugglers and released upon payment.

Survey respondents also reported experiences of labor exploitation with eight per cent of respondents stated that they had worked or performed other activities without getting the expected payments. These experiences were reported in the Republic of Türkiye and the Islamic Republic of Iran and occurred in the services sector, in factories or in the construction sector.

METHODOLOGY

The survey

This customized survey is a part of the IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) activities in the Mediterranean region. DTM activities in the Western Balkans started in October 2015 and were conducted within the framework of the IOM's research on populations on the move through the Mediterranean and Western Balkan (WB) routes to Europe. The analysis provides information on profiles, transit routes and needs. The survey gathers information about migrants' profiles, including age, sex, gender, and areas of origin, levels of education before migration, key transit points on their route, cost of the journey, reasons for moving, intentions and needs.

Methodology

The data presented in this report is based on a customized survey and was collected from 23 March to 4 April 2023 in three reception facilities in Serbia. The reference population consisted of nationals of the Afghanistan resident in one of these three reception facilities in Serbia, who intend to travel onwards to Western and Northern Europe. IOM collected data together with the Serbian Commissariat for Refugees and Migration (SCRM) in Obrenovac, Preševo and Adaševci.

Limitations

The data is based on a convenience sample of individual Afghanistan interviewed in these locations during the timeframe indicated and should therefore not be generalized to the population of Afghan migrants in Serbia. Limitations and constraints are that results cannot be generalized. Due to the high mobility of the migrants, it was not possible to obtain a representative sample of this overall population. Another limitation is that IOM was unable to survey any women for this study. This is due to the fact that there are generally fewer women who migrate but also potentially due to the fact that they may not feel comfortable speaking with

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