



FLOW MONITORING SURVEYS' REPORT
SERBIA

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DTM

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1 Executive summary

This report presents the results of the first round of the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) Flow Monitoring Surveys (FMS) implemented in Serbia. FMS are a type of quantitative survey, which provide a snapshot of the profiles, experiences and needs of migrants residing in reception centres in Serbia. The data was collected from 30 June to 19 September 2022, in four reception centres. The IOM interviewed a total of 206 individual respondents.¹

Over half (55.6%) of the respondents were single adult males between the ages of 18 and 29. The top three nationalities were Afghans (48.6%), Pakistanis (22.8%) and Syrians (13.6%). Overall, people tend to have completed mixed levels of education, with 42 per cent of respondents having completed at least lower secondary education and 41.2 per cent were employed prior to leaving their countries of origin. Just over half (55.8%) of the respondents were travelling alone, while those who were travelling in a group were overwhelmingly travelling with non-relatives.

No respondents reported travelling with a facilitator. This may be due to a combination of factors. First, it may also be because those who travelled with facilitators might be unwilling to affirm this. Second, migrants may be more likely to attempt border crossings alone in warm weather months, as the terrain can be easier to navigate.

Over one-third (36.4%) of the migrants surveyed had been living in a country other than their own country of origin for at least a year, prior to arriving in Serbia. Of these, 52 per cent had been living in Republic of Türkiye, while 45.8 per cent had been living in Greece.

Germany (32%), France (22.8%) and Italy (19.4%) were the most frequently cited countries of intended destination. Pakistani nationals were more likely to cite Italy as their country of intended destination (66% of all Pakistani respondents noted Italy), while Afghans were more likely to state Germany and France as their intended country of destination with 40 per cent and 35 per cent respectively. The vast majority (71%) of nationals from the Syrian Arab Republic stated that Germany was their country of intended destination.

The three main reported drivers of migration were war and conflict (64.6%), economic reasons (16.5%), and limited access to services (4.8%).

During their journeys, 36.6 per cent of the respondents reported at least one problem, ranging from robbery, theft of documents, health-related issues, mental health problems as well as a lack of food and shelter.²

Almost two-thirds (65.8%) of respondents mentioned that they were aware of IOM's Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVVR) program.

Most Afghans (59.8%) left Afghanistan less than six months prior to the survey indicating that they had left due to the instability in the country stemming from the takeover of the Taliban in August 2021.

Additionally, 5.8 per cent of all respondents reported having been pushed back at least once during their journeys with 83.3 per cent of these respondents having been pushed back more than once before reaching Serbia.

¹ The term "respondents" refers to migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers as the reference population is made of mixed migration flows. These terms are used interchangeably throughout the report.

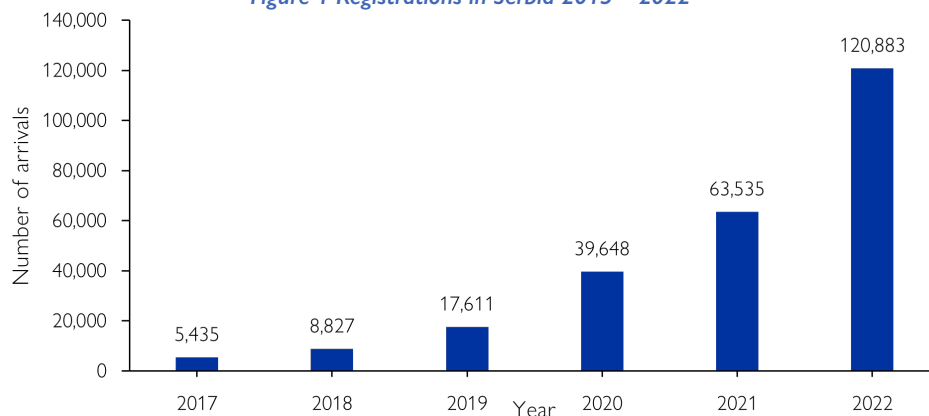
² These are the main needs faced during their journeys, when migrants are in transit and not while they are hosted at TRCs where they have recourse to a shelter as well as a range of support services, including food, non-food items as well as mental health and psychosocial support.

Over two-thirds of respondents (81.8%) have spent more than 2,500 USD on their journeys. The journeys were largely financed with savings or through selling of property in the countries of origin. Almost half (46.5%) of the respondents reported being vaccinated against COVID-19, and 76.8 per cent of those who were not vaccinated were not interested in getting vaccinated.

2 Introduction

Since 2015, the Western Balkans (WB) region has emerged as a major crossroads for migrants attempting to reach the European Union (EU). Prior to 2017, migrants travelled mainly through North Macedonia and Serbia. However, in 2017, the routes diversified with increasing flows following the Albania, Kosovo*,³ Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina route.

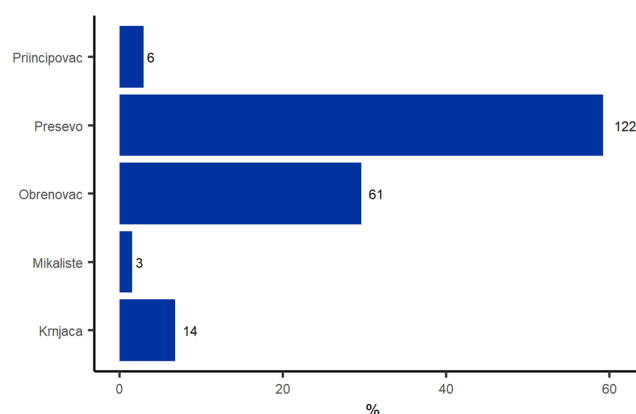
Figure 1 Registrations in Serbia 2015 – 2022



There has been a consistent and significant increase in the number of arrivals in Serbia and the rest of the Western Balkans since 2017. The travel restrictions relating to the COVID-19 pandemic have not stemmed the increase in arrivals in Serbia, unlike other countries in the Western Balkans. 2022 marked an increase in the mixed migration flow, the highest since 2015, with 120,883 migrant arrivals recorded by Serbian authorities in 2022. This is consistent with broader trends in the WB region. In light of this increase, the IOM launched the first round of FMS at WB level, of which Serbia was a part.

To better grasp these changes and to improve assistance to migrants, the IOM started conducting the DTM FMS in the Western Balkans. This report contains findings from the DTM FMS conducted by IOM field staff between 30 June and 19 September 2022. Field staff surveyed a total of 206 individuals the temporary reception centres in Preševo, Principovac, and asylum centres in Obrenovac and Krnjača as well as the One Stop Point in Miksalište, Belgrade.

Figure 2 Number of interviewed migrants per migrant reception centre



³ References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

The first section presents the baseline profile of the population interviewed, followed by a section on the migrants' travel experience up to the location where the interview took place. The report then highlights respondents' experiences of violence, exploitation and abuse. The last two sections look at COVID-19 awareness, the impact of the journey and the respondent's views on their return intentions.

2.1 DTM's Flow Monitoring Surveys

FMS are part of the IOM's DTM activities in the Mediterranean region. These started in October 2015 and were conducted within the framework of the IOM's research on populations on the move through the Mediterranean and WB routes to Europe. The analysis provides information on profiles, transit routes and vulnerabilities of respondents.

The FMS gather information about migrants' profiles, including age, sex, gender, countries and areas of origin, levels of education and employment status before migration, key transit points on their route, cost of the journey, reasons for moving and intentions. It also has a module on migrants' vulnerability to and potential experience of abuse, exploitation and violence.

The questionnaire used in this round is the same as the questionnaire used in 2021, including questions related to migration factors for Afghan nationals, awareness and impact of COVID-19 and return intentions. More information on the questionnaire, sampling and survey implementation can be found in the [methodology section](#).

All analyses, together with the latest information on arrivals to Europe, can be accessed via DTM's portal on [mixed migration flows to Europe](#).

3 Migrants travelling through Serbia: baseline profile

3.1 Sample size and main nationalities

The information in this report is based on a sample of 206 respondents.⁴ The two main declared nationalities⁵ of respondents were Afghanistan (48.6%) and Pakistan (22.8%), followed by the Syrian Arab Republic (13.6%), Morocco (5.3%), Burundi (4.8%), India (2.4%), and less than one per cent from Algeria, Islamic Republic of Iran, the Gambia and Ghana. Compared to the previous FMS conducted in the country, there has been a noticeable increase in migrants from Burundi owing to the existence of a visa free regime between Serbia and Burundi.⁶

3.2 Demographic profile of respondents

Male migrants represent the majority (96.6%) of the sample, followed by 3.4 per cent female respondents.⁷ The most frequent age of respondents was 23, with the youngest migrant interviewed being 18 years old and the oldest 53 years old.

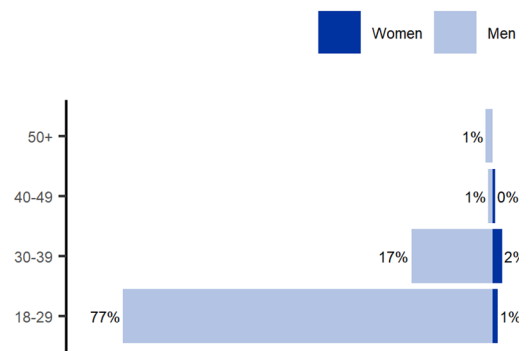
⁴ Two other migrants met by enumerators stated that they had already participated in the FMS before, and hence were not asked the remainder of the questions after the initial ones.

⁵ The sample covers nationality figures that are consistent with overall nationality registrations by Serbian authorities.

⁶ This visa free regime was formally suspended in October 2022.

⁷ The questionnaire includes one question on sex and one question on gender self-identification, both including the possibility of declining to specify for the respondent.

Figure 3 Percentages of interviewed migrants disaggregated by sex and age



Source: DTM SRB FMS 2022, n=206.

Over three fourths of the respondents (78.5%) declared they were single, followed by 20 per cent who were married, one per cent divorced, the remainder were either widowed or the information was unknown. Eighty per cent of the respondents did not have children. Of the 19.4 per cent of those who reported having children, 90.5 per cent declared having at least one child left in the country of origin. Fifty-six per cent of these children in the countries of origin are under the age of five, while 37 per cent are between five and fourteen. Only two respondents noted that they had children in the country of destination.

The most spoken languages by the respondents were Pashto (26%), Urdu (22.5%), Arabic (20.1%), Dari (16.2%) followed by Farsi (6.9%), Kirundi (4.9%), Punjabi (1.5%) and finally English and Gujrati with less than one per cent each. Less than one fifth (16%) of the respondents reported English as their second language.

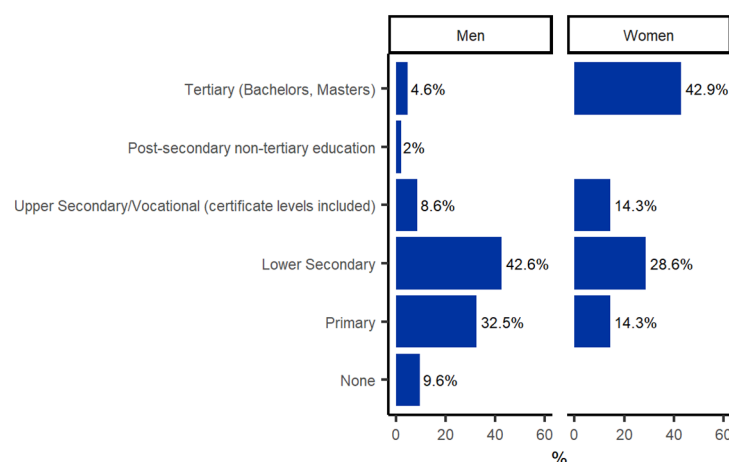
Of the total respondents, 16.9 per cent stated that they were internally displaced in their countries of origin before moving internationally. Of those who were internally displaced, 76.5 per cent came from Afghanistan, 20.6% from Pakistan and 2.9% came from the Syrian Arab Republic.

3.3 Education and employment

3.3.1 Education

Information on the educational attainment of different nationalities can help facilitate the planning of integration programmes in host countries. Respondents are therefore asked about the highest level of formal education they have completed. A majority of the respondents had completed primary (31.5%) or lower secondary education (41.7%) while 8.7 per cent had completed upper secondary education. Fewer respondents (5.8%) had completed tertiary education, including bachelor's and master's degrees while 1.9 per cent had completed post-secondary professional training. One person had attended religious school and one person a short-cycle tertiary education and 9.2 per cent of the respondents did not have any formal education.

Figure 4 Percentages of men and women disaggregated by their education level

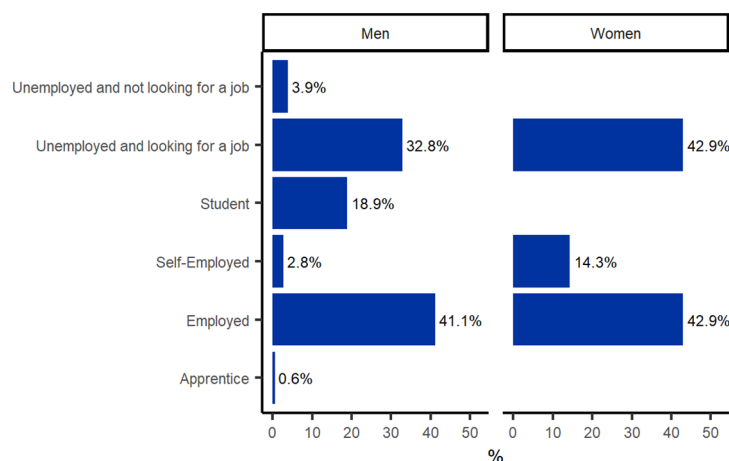


Source: DTM SRB FMS 2022, n=206.

3.3.2 Employment status before departure

Forty-one per cent of the respondents declared that they had been employed prior to leaving their countries of origin or their country of habitual residence. One third (33.2%) were unemployed and looking for work, while 18.8 per cent were students and 3.2 per cent were self-employed.

Figure 5 Percentages of men and women disaggregated by employment status before departure



Source: DTM SRB FMS 2022, n=206.

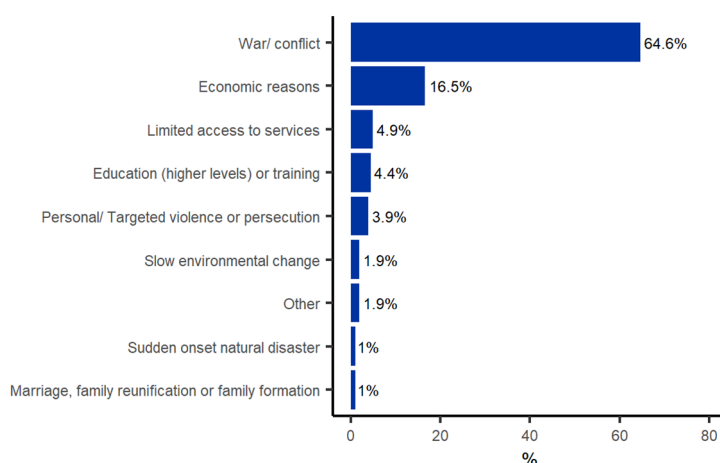
Among those who declared that they had been employed prior to leaving their country or origin, the most frequently held jobs were skilled manual labour (23.8%), this was followed by armed forced and plant and machine operators, each at 13.1 per cent, and service and sales workers (11.9%). Craft and related trade workers represented 9.5 per cent of the respondents. The most frequently cited sectors of employment were the agricultural industry (24.1%), transport (13.2%), construction (7.2%), manufacturing (6%) and public administration (4.8 %).

3.4 Reasons for leaving the country of origin

Interviewees were asked to mention the main reasons for leaving their countries of origin. Almost two-thirds (64.6%) cited war the main reason they left, followed by 16.5 per cent who stated economic reasons. This was followed by limited access to services (4.9%), a lack of education opportunities (4.4%), and targeted violence (3.9%).

In terms of nationalities, 96 per cent of Syrians and 90 per cent of Afghans report war as the main reason for leaving their country of origin. For nationals of Pakistan, 36.2 per cent reported war as the main reason they left their country of origin, followed by 25.6 per cent mentioning economic reasons as the main cause of their migration. Burundians mostly (80%) mentioned economic reasons for leaving their country of origin.

Figure 6 Percentage of respondents stating their first and second reason for leaving the country of origin



Source: DTM SRB FMS 2022, n=206.

3.5 Reasons for leaving the country of departure

Over one third (36.4%) of the migrants had been living in a country other than that of their origin or habitual residence for at least a year prior to moving again. Most people who left a country other than that of their origin had been staying there between one and two years, and in most cases departed from either Republic of Türkiye (52%) or Greece (45.8%).

To understand why people had decided to leave at this specific moment, after having lived in another country for so long, respondents were asked about their main reason for departing. 54.2 per cent stated economic reasons as their primary motivation for leaving, while 15.3 per cent mentioned fear of deportation or problems with documents. This was followed by limited access to services (12.5%), slow environmental change (11.1%), and personal or targeted violence (6.9%).

3.6 Mode of travel

Just over half (55.8%) of the respondents noted that they travelled alone while the other 44.2 per cent travelled with a group. The majority (85.7%) of those travelling in a group were travelling with non-relatives.

3.7 Cost of journey

Half of the respondents reported that the estimated cost of their journey was between 2,501 USD and 5,000 USD while 30.5 per cent noted that they had paid between 5,001 USD and 10,000 USD during their journey. Fifteen per cent of respondents reported paying between 1,000 USD and 2,500 USD for their journey. Only 3.6 per cent reported paying less than 1,000 USD and 2 per cent reported paying more than 10,001 USD.

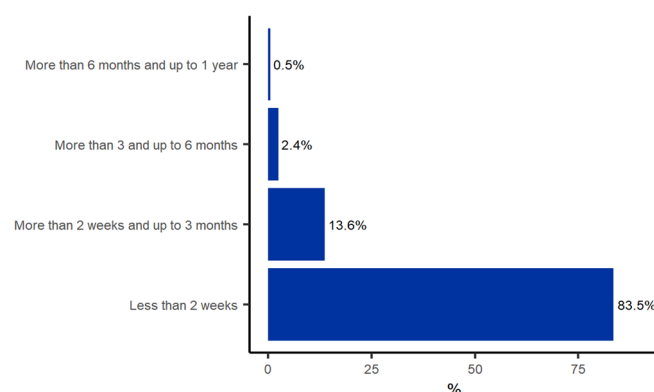
When asked how they financed their journeys, the majority of the respondents (55.8%) noted that they had done so by taking on a loan/debt. This was followed by 30.1 per cent who reported using their personal savings, 14 per cent who had to sell property in order to finance their journeys and 11.6 per cent who received the money from relatives in the country of origin. Forty-two per cent of respondents said that they paid for the full amount of their journey before departing. This was followed by 29.3 per cent who paid in instalments through the hawala⁸ system, 15 per cent who had to pay upon arrival in the intended destination country, 7.5 per cent who paid per leg of the journey and 3.5 per cent who paid in cash instalments.

Over half (54.9%) of the respondents reported that they had to repay part of the expenses of the journey upon arrival at the destination. This is potentially significant as many migrants incur significant debts throughout their journey, which can cause socio-economic difficulties in the countries of destination as well as potentially compound existing mental health issues.

3.8 Entry and length of stay in Serbia

When asked how long respondents had been in Serbia, 83.5 per cent had been there for less than two weeks while 13.6 per cent had been there for more than two weeks but less than three months. This demonstrates the highly mobile migration patterns in 2022.

Figure 7 Percentage of interviewed migrants stating the length of stay in the present country



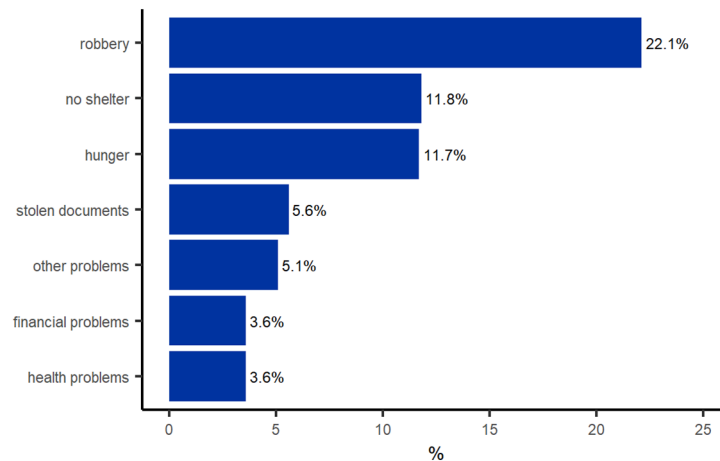
Source: DTM SRB FMS 2022, n=206.

⁸ Hawala is an informal money transfer system in which money is passed on through a network of brokers (who are known as hawaladars) without the actual/physical movement of cash. It is the transmission of money in ways other than the regular banking routes and hence sometimes called underground banking.

3.9 Problems and Protection Risks encountered during the journey

Respondents were asked about specific incidents and problems they faced during the journey to Serbia. Just over one fifth reported that they had been robbed. Of these, the vast majority (95.3%) had occurred in a country of transit while only 4.6 per cent occurred in Serbia; 14.3 per cent of female respondents reported having been robbed, compared to 22.3 per cent of male respondents. More than a third of all the robberies happened in Greece, while a quarter of the robberies occurred in Republic of Türkiye. Around six per cent of the respondents also reported robberies had occurred in Islamic Republic of Iran and North Macedonia.

Figure 8 Percentage of respondents who reported some problems either in transit or in Serbia



Source: DTM SRB FMS 2022, n=206.

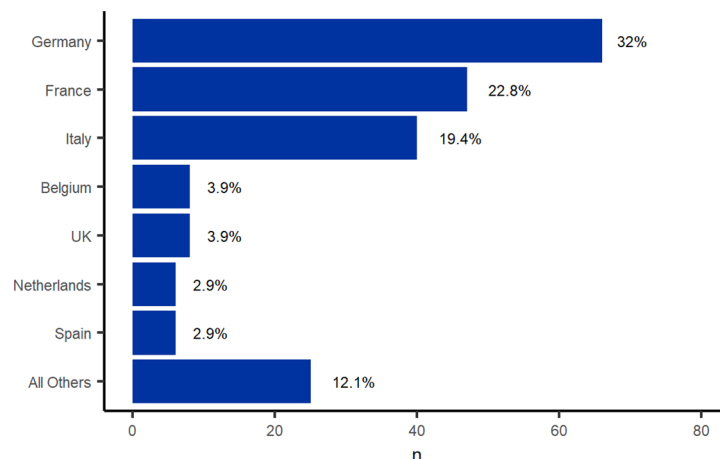
Hunger continues to be a prevalent issue among migrants travelling through the WB route. Most people reported experiencing issues of hunger in transit including in Republic of Türkiye, Greece, Bulgaria and North Macedonia.

Respondents were also asked if they had been readmitted to another country during their journey by the authorities of transit countries. Although most people had not been readmitted, 5.9 per cent reported having experienced this. Of these, two-thirds of people reported having been readmitted between two and five times, while 16.7 per cent said they had been readmitted once and 16.7 per cent stated that they had been readmitted between six and ten times.

3.10 Intended destination

The survey also asked about intended final destinations. Germany, France, and Italy were the most frequently cited countries of intended destination.

Figure 9 Most frequently cited countries of intended destination



Survey respondents were asked why they chose their countries of intended destination. The most frequently reported answers were ease of access to asylum procedures (39.3%), appealing socio-economic conditions (29.1%), relatives in the intended destination country (13.6%), safety (5.3%), the only available or feasible choice due to policy and geographical constraints (4.8%), and well-established network of co-nationals (3.8%).

Of those who mentioned Germany as their intended country of destination, 31.8% reported ease of access to asylum procedures, appealing socio-economic conditions (27.3%), and family in the country (27.3%) as the main reasons for choosing Germany. Of those who reported France as their intended destination country, 57.4 per cent reported ease of access to asylum procedure as their main reason, while 25.5 per cent mentioned appealing socio-economic conditions. For the survey respondents who reported Italy as their country of intended destination, 42.5 per cent mentioned ease of access to asylum procedures while 37.5 per cent stated appealing socio-economic conditions as the reason they chose Italy.

The majority of survey respondents (71.9%) stated that they did not have family in the country of intended destination, 16.1 per cent stated that they had immediate family (spouses, children or parents) in the country of destination, while 12.1 per cent noted that they had extended family in the country of destination.

The intended countries of destination differ for the three main nationalities surveyed (Afghans, Pakistanis and Syrians). For nationals of Afghanistan, the main countries of intended destination were Germany (40%), France (34%), Belgium (7.1%), the UK (6.7%), Italy (3%), and Switzerland (3%). For nationals of Pakistan, the most frequently cited countries of destination were Italy (66%), France (11%), and Spain (11%). Nationals of the Syrian Arab Republic cited Germany (71%), the Netherlands (11%) and Austria, Italy as a joint third most cited destination with 3.6 per cent each.

4 Afghanistan

This section presents the profile and main characteristics of the Afghan nationals interviewed, in light of the Taliban takeover in August 2021 that have affected the country and may have triggered new departures from the country.

4.1 Demographic profile

A total of 99 respondents from Afghanistan were interviewed, representing 49 per cent of the total sample, 77 per cent were men and the remaining 23 per cent were women.

The most frequent age group of the Afghan nationals was 21 to 22 while three quarters of the respondents were 25 years or younger. 84.8 per cent were single while 14.1 per cent were married and 1 per cent were widowed. All of those who were married stated that they had children, most of whom were still in Afghanistan. Seven per cent of those with children stated their children were travelling with them.

Over two-thirds (71.1%) of Afghans stated that they were travelling alone. Of the 31.4 per cent who were travelling in a group, 85.7 per cent stated that they were not travelling with family.

Most of the Afghans interviewed declared that Pashtu (54%) was their first language, followed by 33.8 per cent who stated that Dari was their first language and 12.2 per cent whose first language was Farsi.

4.2 Education

The education profile of the Afghan population is mixed, although, in general they tend to have lower levels of educational attainment. Almost one-third, (29.3%) of respondents had completed primary education, while 43.4 per cent had completed lower secondary school. Less than one-tenth (6.1%) per cent had completed upper secondary school, while 7.1 per cent had completed post-secondary or some form of tertiary education and 13.1 per cent had not completed any formal education.

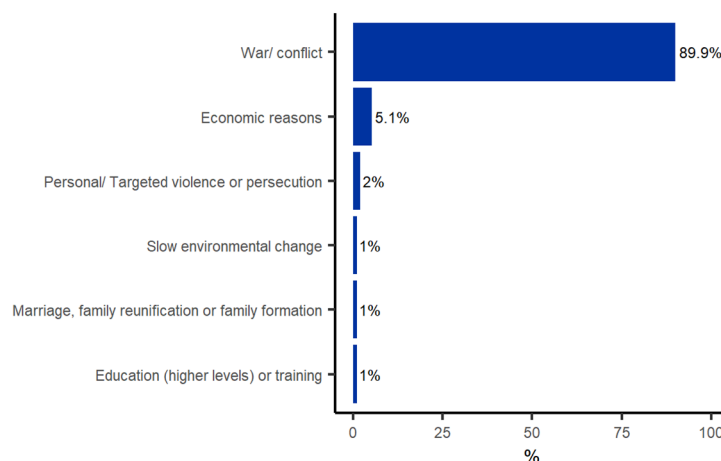
4.3 Employment

Thirty-two per cent of the Afghan nationals interviewed were employed before leaving Afghanistan, while nineteen per cent stated that they were students. Forty per cent stated that they were unemployed and looking for work.

4.4 Reasons for leaving the country of origin and the country of departure

Of the total population group of Afghans in this sample, 90 per cent stated that they had left Afghanistan due to war and conflict. Five per cent stated economic reasons for leaving, while two per cent stated personal or targeted violence and one per cent stated education, family reunification and slow environmental change each. These figures demonstrate that war and conflict continue to be a key driver for people leaving Afghanistan. People who flee war and conflict can possibly suffer from complex forms of trauma and may have specific psychosocial needs.

Figure 10 Percentage of respondents from Afghanistan stating reason for leaving the country of origin



Source: DTM SRB FMS 2022, n=206.

Most Afghans (59.8%) left Afghanistan less than six months prior to the survey indicating that they had left as a consequence of the instability in the country stemming from the takeover of the Taliban in August 2021. Of these, 41.2 per cent stated that they had left less than three months ago while 18.6 per cent stated that they had left between three and six months ago.

5 Vulnerability to violence, exploitation and abuse

The questionnaire also included a module that gathers data on migrants' vulnerability and the forms of abuse, violence and exploitation experienced during the journey or observed among other migrants travelling with them. More specifically, to better understand the risk of human trafficking, the survey includes six questions to capture information about whether the respondents had, during their journey:

1. worked or performed activities without receiving the expected payment.
2. been forced to perform work or activities against their will.
3. been approached by someone offering marriage.
4. been kept at a certain location against their will (by persons other than authorities of the country).
5. experienced some form of physical violence.
6. witnessed someone been threatened with sexual violence.

Affirmative responses to these six questions may indicate experiences of human trafficking, exploitation and abusive practices, physical and sexual violence experienced by the respondent or by their family members. Interviewers who come across respondents with protection needs, refer them to relevant services and protection actors.

Overall, 38.35 per cent of all respondents answered "yes" to at least one of the six direct indicators of human trafficking, exploitation and abuse based on their own experience. Only one respondent answered "yes" to four out of six indicators, while no respondent answered "yes" to all six indicators.

With regard to the geographical areas where the reported experiences of violence and abuse took place, Greece, Bulgaria, Republic of Türkiye and North Macedonia were the most frequently reported countries.

5.1 Labour exploitation

Of the total sample, 9.5 per cent reported they had worked or performed other activities during their journey without receiving the expected payment. Twenty-one per cent of these incidents happened in Greece, while the remaining seventy-nine per cent occurred in Republic of Türkiye. The main sectors of employment that this occurred in were manufacturing (57.9%), services (21%), agriculture (5.3%) and construction (5.3%).

5.2 Forced labour

Of the total respondents, 3.9 per cent reported having been forced to work or conduct activities against their will. These experiences reportedly happened in Greece, Republic of Türkiye and North Macedonia.

5.3 Offers of an arranged marriage

Respondents were also asked if they had been approached by someone offering marriage. Of the respondents in this survey, 1.5 per cent reported that this had happened. Respondents mentioned that this had happened in Greece and in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

5.4 Being kept at a certain location against their will

Three per cent of respondents noted that they had been kept at a location against their will. This allegedly happened in Greece, Bulgaria, North Macedonia, and Republic of Türkiye.

5.5 Experienced some form of physical violence

Almost one-third of respondents (33.5%) reported having experienced some form of physical violence during their journey. The most frequently cited countries where this happened were Greece (37.3%), Bulgaria and Republic of Türkiye each with 17.9 per cent, and North Macedonia with 12 per cent. Of those respondents who had experienced some form of physical violence, 29 reported experiencing physical violence by police.

5.6 Observed threats with sexual violence

Three per cent of respondents noted that they had been threatened with sexual violence during their journey. This was reported to have happened in Greece and in North Macedonia.

6 Covid-19

Almost half (46.5%) of the migrants interviewed declared that they had been vaccinated against COVID-19. Of the 53.5 per cent of people who were unvaccinated, 13.9 per cent stated that they would like to be vaccinated while 76.8 per cent said that they did not want to be vaccinated. The remainder were unsure.

7. Return intentions

Of the total respondents, 90 per cent reported that they had not considered returning to their country of origin during the journey. Of those, 67.1 per cent stated that they were not interested, while 22.8 per cent said that this was due to ongoing insecurity in their countries of origin. 4.3 per cent stated that it was because they would join family in the destination countries while 2.8 per cent mentioned that assistance or grants for voluntary return was provided too slowly. Finally, 2.8 per cent mentioned that they had successfully obtained protection or other form of regular permits.

Of those who had considered returning, 75 per cent reported being too tired or exhausted to continue, while the remainder cited a lack of job opportunities or legal barriers. When asked at what point of their journey they had considered returning to their countries of origin, 62.5 per cent stated that it was in Serbia while 37.5 per cent said it had happened in Greece or Republic of Türkiye.

Almost two-thirds (65.8%) of respondents mentioned that they were aware of IOM's Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVVR) program. Over two-thirds (71.1%) of these respondents learned of AVVR programs in Serbia while the remainder heard of it in transit countries. Almost four-fifths (78.8%) of those who had heard of AVVR had heard of it through the IOM, while 19.2 mentioned having learned of it through friends and relatives followed by 1.9 per cent who stated they learned of it on social media.

8. Methodology

FMS in Serbia were conducted as part of DTM activities in the Mediterranean that the IOM launched in October 2015 and are presently conducted within the framework of IOM's research on populations on the move, through the Mediterranean and Western Balkans Routes to Europe. The data collection involves direct interviews with migrants and collation of statistical data on arrivals and migrant presence in reception and outside from national authorities and IOM staff presence. Regular updates on arrivals are available on DTM Flows to Europe Geoportal.

In Serbia, IOM applied a non-random sampling procedure, which depended on DTM staff having access to temporary reception centres (TRCs). This unavoidably introduces sample bias. The IOM used a convenience sample, which means that the figures should not be interpreted to be representative of the broader population of migrants in Serbia.

FMS in Serbia were conducted by IOM field staff between June and September 2022 in the reception centres where IOM operates in Serbia. Field staff surveyed a total of 206 individuals the temporary reception centres in Preševo, Principovac, and asylum centres in Obrenovac and Krnjaca as well as the One Stop Point in Miksaliste, Belgrade. A total number of 10 enumerators (5 female, 5 male) with language skills in English, Arabic, Dari, Farsi, Turkish and Pashto were trained by IOM.

The survey is designed to profile third country (non-European) nationals who are migrating to the countries of Europe through the Mediterranean and Western Balkan routes. Only migrants aged 14 and above are approached and the questionnaire is proposed only to migrants and refugees who have arrived in the country of the survey no more than one year prior to the interview.

The FMS questionnaire was available in e-format in Kobo (English and French) and in paper forms translated into Arabic, English, Farsi, French, Pashto and Urdu. Respondents were approached in a simple random sample by IOM field staff working in the TRCs, with those who give their consent to be interviewed proceeding with the remaining questions. The interviews were anonymous and conducted one-on-one with respondents, in safe and isolated spaces, also considering the COVID-19 regulations in force in Serbia at the time of the data collection. Migrants could decline to respond to individual questions or to interrupt the interview if they wish to do so.

8.1 Sampling

The sampling frame was agreed with IOM's Regional Office in Vienna to ensure the consistency and solidity of the final sample for research purposes, reflecting the general demographic profile of migrant presence in reception centres of the country in the covered period. In Serbia, IOM applied a non-random, convenience sampling procedure due to the availability to reception centres in Serbia, which may have introduced some sample bias.

8.2 The questionnaire

DTM's FMS baseline module captures data on the demographic profile of the respondents, their education and employment background, the circumstances of their migration journey and migration factors, their place of origin or their last country of habitual residence, and their future intentions with regards to the country of destination.

The second FMS module contains questions that refer to experience exploitation, violence and abuse that may amount to human trafficking. The module was prepared together with IOM's Migrant Protection and Assistance Division and gathers information on events and practices, experienced directly by the respondent or by his/her family member(s), or that are witnessed by the respondent during the journey. The third FMS module contains questions related to the COVID-19 pandemic, focusing primarily on personal knowledge and awareness of coronavirus disease symptoms among respondents and on travel restrictions related to COVID-19, and if they had already access to vaccination. The set of questions was designed to understand whether migrants are aware of COVID-19 symptoms, mitigation measures, and how potential restrictions may have impacted their migration journey and the economic situation of respondents and of their families in terms of ability to send and/or receive financial remittances.

The fourth module contains questions related to return intentions. As outreach activities on the existence and functioning of AVRR were run by IOM in the country, this module of the FMS – to avoid repetitions – only ask respondents few questions on the intention to return to the country of origin and awareness and knowledge of the AVRR options available.

8.3 The questionnaire

The data presented in this document are representative of the individuals surveyed in the covered locations and during the indicated timeframe. The data should not be generalized and should not represent a full picture of regional migration, but rather of migratory flows in the specific locations monitored in Serbia during the period covered.

It should also be noted that a lower percentage of women of the total migrants in Serbia were interviewed, for several reasons, including the fact that women tend to be less willing to talk even when women enumerators are deployed. Moreover, women tend to travel less often than men alone, and they are more difficult to approach when travelling with male family members.