



39 municipalities  
in  
5 cantons in FBiH and  
5 regions in RS



139  
locations  
covered



137 migrants  
estimated  
outside TRCs

This report aims to provide an estimation of the migrant<sup>2</sup> population currently not accommodated in any official Temporary Reception Centre (TRC) in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) as well as their profiles, needs and intentions. This is done by interviewing migrants and key informants in locations where migrants are known to gather outside TRCs. A team of 57 data collectors from IOM, the Service for Foreigners' Affairs (SFA)<sup>1</sup> and the Red Cross Society of BiH (RCSBH) collected the data on 15 March 2023 in 139 unique locations across the country.

## KEY FINDINGS

In total, IOM estimates the presence of 137 migrants outside of official temporary reception centres in BiH. More migrants are arriving in BiH but spending less time, opting instead to transit rapidly through the territory to cross the border into the European Union. For example, the average length of stay in transit reception centres in the country has decreased from 53 days in January 2022 to 6 days in January 2023.

In February 2023, the SFA registered 1,564 new arrivals, a 12.9 per cent increase compared to January 2023. This is a total of 2,927 new arrivals in January and February 2023, and the most arrivals across January and February in BiH since systematic data collection began.

Migrants outside of temporary reception centres used to squat in buildings or camp in parks or rural areas. However, the tendency now is to stay in private accommodation or in TRCs for a couple of days then move quickly towards the exist points of the country by using taxis and/or buses. Migrants arrive in the border regions in Una-Sana Canton and in the Banja Luka region in the evening and then attempt border crossings very late at night or in the morning before dawn.

In this round, IOM visited 139 different locations across BiH with a focus on active transit locations, such as bus stops to interview as many people transiting as possible. IOM met and interviewed 112 migrants in this round. The estimate of 137 migrants is established through data triangulation with key informants (see methodology).

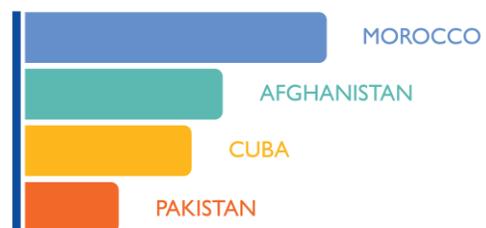
## DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES AND LOCALIZATION

For the first time in five months, Afghan nationals were no longer the most represented nationality among the sample. In this round, Moroccan nationals were the most represented nationality making up 28.9 per cent of the total sample, an increase of 10 per cent from the previous round.

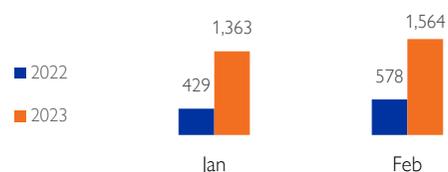
Moroccan nationals are increasingly arriving in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In January and February 2023, 393 Moroccan nationals took up residence in the TRCs. This is a significant increase from 2022, when 144 Moroccans nationals were present in TRCs for the entire year. By comparison, there were 239 Moroccans in TRCs in 2021.

Afghan nationals were the second most represented nationality, making up 18.8 per cent of the sample. This is a decrease of 18 per cent from the previous round. Cuban nationals continue arriving in increasing numbers in the region and were the third most represented nationality at 16.4 per cent – a 10 per cent increase from the previous round. Pakistani nationals made up 9.4 per cent of the sample while Syrians rounded out the top five at 5.5 per cent. Chinese nationals at 4.7 per cent, Algerian and Turkish nationals at 3.9 per cent, Bangladeshis and Iranians at 1.6 per cent and Tunisian nationals at 0.8 per cent.

### TOP NATIONALITIES



### NUMBER OF MIGRANTS REGISTERED BY SFA JANUARY & FEBRUARY 2022 COMPARED TO 2023



### FIGURES AT A GLANCE

- In total, authorities in the six Western Balkan countries registered 192,182 migrants in 2022<sup>3</sup>. This is a 59% increase compared to 2021 in the Western Balkans.
- In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the SFA registered 27,429 migrants in 2022, a 74 per cent increase from 2021.
- In February 2023, the SFA registered 1,564 new arrivals in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

1. The SFA, within the Ministry of Security (MoS), is the responsible body for the registration of all foreigners on the territory of BiH, including the issuing of attestations of those expressing the intention to seek asylum. The MoS is also formally responsible for the management of the Immigration Centre and the TRCs.

2. No document checks are carried out during the data collection to confirm the statements. Interviewees therefore include asylum seekers and refugees.

3. Data retrieved from the [IOM's Flow Monitoring Portal](#)



Consistent with trends in previous rounds, the majority (89.1%) of the sample consisted of **adult men**, while **adult women** made up 7 per cent of the sample. **Children** consisted of 3.9 per cent of the sample population. The children came from Cuba (40%), the Syrian Arab Republic (40%), and the Islamic Republic of Iran (20%).

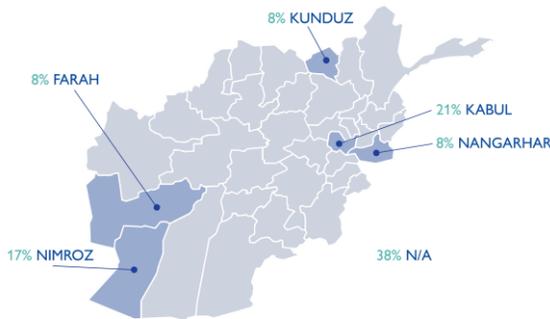
SEX AND AGE DISAGGREGATED DATA



Afghans continue to arrive in large numbers in the Western Balkans. In 2022, they constituted the top nationality of arrivals in the region, making up over one-fourth (28%) of all arrivals.

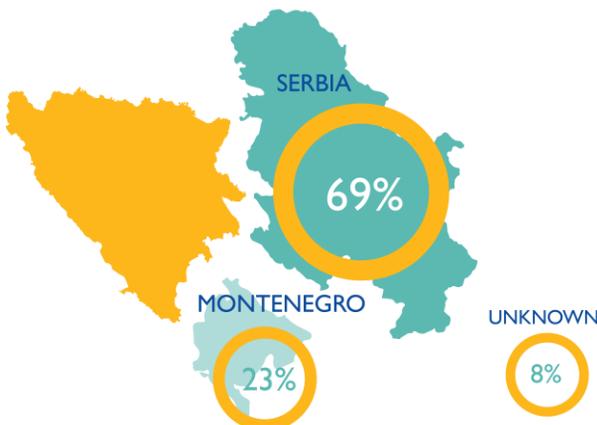
The main provinces of origin in Afghanistan were Kabul, Nangarhar, Nimroz, Farah and Kunduz.

MAIN AFGHAN PROVINCES OF ORIGIN



Most respondents (69%) had entered BiH from Serbia, a seven per cent decrease from the previous round, while 23 per cent of respondents entered from Montenegro a 16 per cent increase from the previous round.

COUNTRY OF ENTRY



Una Sana Canton had the highest proportion of the migrants in this round with 40.2 per cent. This was followed by Sarajevo at 32.1 per cent. Republika Srpska saw a 15.1 per cent decrease from the previous round with 11.7 per cent of the migrants interviewed there in this round. IOM teams found 8.8 per cent of the migrants in Bosnian Podrinje and 7.3 per cent in Tuzla.

HEALTH ISSUES AND VULNERABILITIES

The questionnaire captures information on specific individual conditions and vulnerable groups among the migrants. These groups include unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) between 15 and 17, UASCs under 15, children under 5, elderly persons over the age of 60, persons with disabilities, pregnant women and women travelling alone. **In this round, there was one child under the age of five and six persons with medical problems.** These medical problems related to blisters, injuries to legs as well as the common cold.

This data collection exercise also attempts to identify potential medical problems among migrants staying outside TRCs. This is to understand if there are unmet health needs and if people in need of medical attention have indeed received medical assistance in the previous two weeks. This month, **three people needed medical attention in the previous two weeks, for two of whom this medical need went unmet.**



Picture 1. IOM and Red Cross helping migrants at a bus stop in Zvornik in BiH.

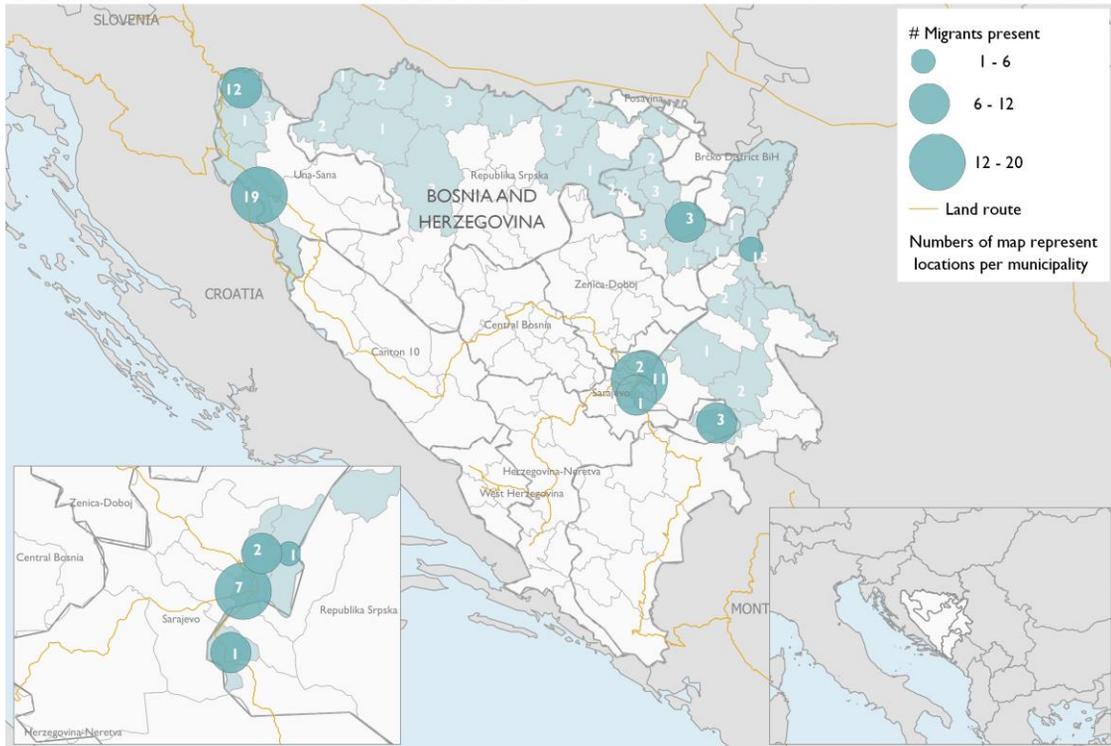


MIGRANT PRESENCE OUTSIDE RECEPTION

Bosnia and Herzegovina  
15 March 2023

Est. **139** MIGRANTS OUTSIDE TRANSIT  
RECEPTION CENTERS\*

137 Assessed locations in  
**4** Cantons **6** Regions in RS **39** Municipalities



This map is for illustration purposes only. Names and boundaries on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM.

Source Data : IOM, National Authorities

INTENDED DESTINATIONS

In round 19, almost a third of the respondents stated that **France** was their intended country of destination. For the first time since these exercises started (March 2021), **Germany did not feature in the top three countries of intended destination.**

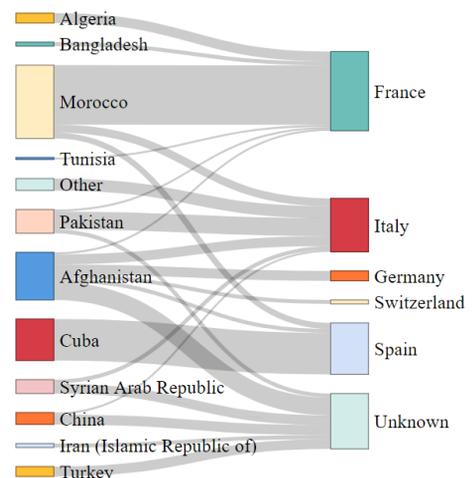
Intended destination countries vary among nationalities and it could be that this is because Moroccans, Cubans and Pakistanis made up a proportionately larger share of the survey sample. These nationalities tend to cite other intended destination countries, as is shown in the intended destination country by nationality figure.

REFERRAL INFORMATION

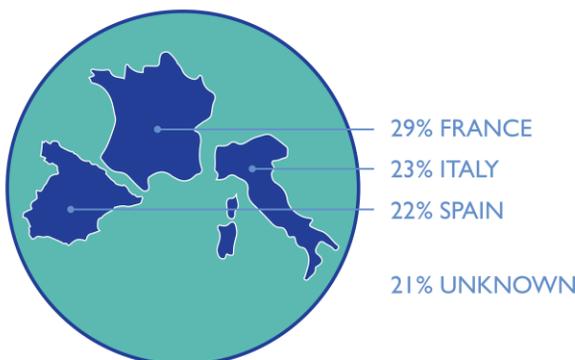
Migrants move rapidly through BiH in an attempt to cross the border into the European Union. Of the survey respondents, 4.5 per cent expressed an interest in remaining in BiH with recognized legal status, residence permit, work permit and the possibility of family reunification.

Most (60.7%) of the respondents declared that they were aware of the option of voluntary return and assisted reintegration (AVRR) to their countries of origin.

INTENDED DESTINATION COUNTRY BY NATIONALITY



INTENDED DESTINATIONS





## METHODOLOGY

The IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) is a system used to capture and monitor displacement and population movements, and to disseminate information regularly and systematically. In BiH, DTM collects data on transits/apprehensions by nationality at entry points, and data on the number of migrants present in Temporary Reception Centres (TRCs). This data has been collected since 2017 as part of the broader monitoring of mixed migration flows through the Western Balkan and the Mediterranean routes to Europe. Since March 2021, DTM in BiH has also been collecting data on migrants' presence outside reception centres and coFlow Monitoring Surveys with migrants in reception.

### Design of the data collection – Round 19

#### Geographical coverage

In round 19, the IOM chose 39 municipalities in five Cantons of the FBiH and in five regions of Republika Srpska entity due to their well-known high presence of migrants. In total, the teams visited 139 unique locations with specific geo-referenced coordinates – known as micro-locations – in 40 different municipalities. In FBiH, the teams visited 35 locations in four municipalities in Una-Sana Canton, 20 locations in four municipalities in Sarajevo Canton, 24 locations in nine municipalities in Tuzla Canton, 20 locations in four municipalities in Herzegovina – Neretva Canton, and six locations in one municipality in Bosnian Podrinje. In RS, the teams visited 57 locations in 22 municipalities (see Map on page 3).

#### Target population

Foreign nationals travelling through or stranded in BiH outside TRCs. Migrants accommodated in official TRCs were excluded.

#### Time frame

Round 19 was carried out on 15 March 2023.

#### Enumerators

Thirteen teams for a total of 32 enumerators (21 male, 11 female), with language skills in English, Arabic, Dari, Farsi, Turkish and Pashto, together with 11 staff from the Red Cross Society BiH (9 male, 2 female), 14 inspectors from the SFA (9 male, 5 female).

#### Data collection methods

The questionnaire is available in paper form and as an online/mobile Kobo form in English. The questionnaire consists of five main sections: Total estimated presence of migrants outside TRCs in one location; Sex and age breakdown for the top five nationality groups; Main vulnerabilities and health issues; Main Routes, Transport, Destinations; Interest in referral and further information. Starting in Round 5, the IOM added an additional question on the main provinces of origin of migrants from Afghanistan, in light of the displacements triggered by the Taliban takeover of the country.

Starting from Round 13, the IOM introduced a second methodology based on data triangulation. Triangulation refers to triple verification by interviewing at least three key informants residing in the locations visited to obtain more accurate estimates. These key informants can be migrants or local residents and must be independent of each other. The first methodology collected information at the stock level, carrying out group and not individual interviews, thus leading to possible inconsistencies.

This second methodology therefore increases the possibility of estimating the actual population in outside locations, which may not be present at the time of data collection, as some locations are reached at times of the day when migrants are more mobile. In this round, IOM teams interviewed 112 individual migrants, and based on the data triangulation methodology, estimates the presence of 168 migrants outside temporary reception centres.

#### Limitations

The IOM builds on its pre-established presence in a selected number of municipalities in BiH and on its activities covering the whole country to provide an estimate of the migrant population outside TRCs at a specific point in time. The data collection exercises are conducted in the context of the following limitations:

1. The geographical coverage was limited to a select number of locations in BiH. Since the inception of the project in 2021, thanks to the addition of cantons in FBiH and five regions in the entity of RS, the IOM's geographical coverage has significantly increased. Due to the high mobility of irregular migrants during the summer period, some new locations may not have been visited during the exercise.
2. The SFA's presence during the data collection exercise facilitates access to some locations but may hinder migrants' participation in other locations and/or may cause some bias in migrants' replies to the questions.
3. Data collected using the second methodology is an estimate, which, in combination with the first methodology, will help to obtain a more accurate picture of the number of migrants outside. Having more accurate estimates of the number of people outside TRCs allows IOM, state authorities and humanitarian actors to better provide tailored assistance to those in need.
4. As the exercise attempts to collect data and support migrants outside formal reception facilities, it can be impacted by inclement weather. Cold or wet weather conditions may make it more likely that migrants stay indoors in private facilities or seek temporary accommodation in TRCs.

The IOM is committed to continually and accurately monitoring the locations where migrants usually reside, with the support of other humanitarian organisations. These can change rapidly, in line with the seasons and routes, but also due to other factors (e.g., smuggling and trafficking networks), which have a significant impact on the number of migrants and locations identified through the data collection exercise.