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AFFAIRS



MIGRANT PRESENCE OUTSIDE TEMPORARY RECEPTION CENTRES IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA



8 December 2022

ROUND 17



52 municipalities
in
**7 cantons in FBiH and
6 regions in RS**



237
locations
covered



246 migrants estimated
outside TRCs

On 8 December 2022, IOM conducted the 17th joint data collection exercise in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) together with the Service for Foreigners' Affairs (SFA)¹ and with the support of the Red Cross Society BiH (RCSBH). The purpose of this exercise is to provide an estimation of the migrant² population currently not accommodated in any official Temporary Reception Centre (TRC). The IOM deployed 15 teams of 33 enumerators with the addition of 15 SFA and 20 RCSBH staff in the Cantons of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH) and across the Republika Srpska (RS).

KEY FINDINGS

In total, IOM estimates the presence of 246 migrants outside of official temporary reception centres in BiH. This is a 72.5 per cent decrease from the previous round and is the lowest total in 2022. It is, however, consistent with seasonal trends from previous years as fewer migrants arrive in colder temperatures.

In this round, IOM visited 237 unique locations across BiH, but 208 of them were empty. These are locations known for migrants' presence and are visited consistently throughout these data collection exercises. The absence of migrants in these usual locations, suggests that migrants and smuggling networks may be choosing alternative routes to enter the European Union (EU). The rainy weather and the swelling of the Una River makes crossing it difficult and dangerous, which could also be diverting migrants and smugglers towards alternative routes.

Migrants are also arriving in the border regions in Una-Sana Canton and in the Banja Luka region in the evening, resting for only a few hours in private accommodation and then attempting border crossings very late at night or in the morning before dawn. This high mobility and evening arrivals makes it challenging for IOM teams to detect and interview migrants outside official TRCs.

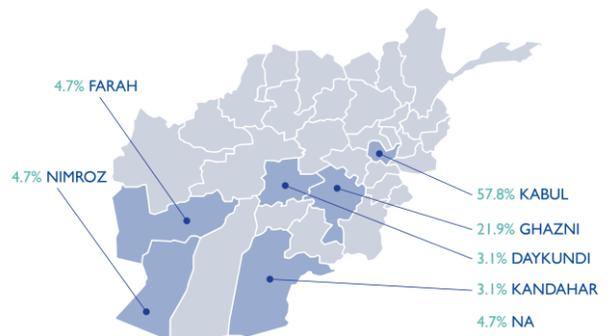
Forty per cent of the migrants interviewed in this round were at bus stations, indicating that people are actively on the move rather than residing in usual accommodation locations.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE AND LOCALIZATION

For the third month in a row, Afghans were the most represented nationality, making up just over half (50.8%) of the sample. Consistent with broader trends in the region, Moroccan nationals continue arriving in increasing numbers and were the second most represented nationality. Cubans, Algerians and Iraqi nationals round out the top five nationalities. There has been a 9.7 per cent drop in Burundian nationals since the termination of visa free travel arrangements between Burundi and Serbia. There was a 3.6 per cent decrease in the number of Pakistani nationals compared to the previous month. Overall, the SFA have registered 50 per cent fewer Pakistani nationals in 2022 compared with the same period in 2021³.

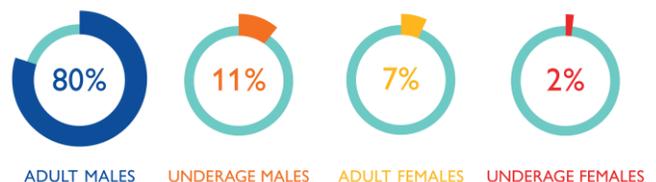
The main Afghan provinces of origin reported were Kabul (57.8%), Ghazni (21.9%), Farah and Nimroz with 4.7 per cent each, followed by Daykundi and Kandahar with 3.1 per cent each.

MAIN PROVINCES OF ORIGIN AS REPORTED BY THE MIGRANTS FROM AFGHANISTAN



The majority (79.4%) of the sample consisted of adult men, while adult women made up 7.1 per cent of the sample. Children consisted of 13.5 per cent of the sample population. Almost two-thirds of the children (64.7%) were from Afghanistan, while the rest came from Cuba (11.8%), the Syrian Arab Republic (11.8%), Iraq (5.9%) and Morocco (5.9%).

SEX AND AGE DISAGGREGATED DATA



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. The Government of BiH signed a readmission agreement with the government of Pakistan in 2020. The first returns of Pakistani nationals from BiH took place in August 2022.



FIGURE 1: MONTHLY NUMBER OF MIGRANTS REGISTERED BY WB AUTHORITIES JANUARY TO NOVEMBER 2022

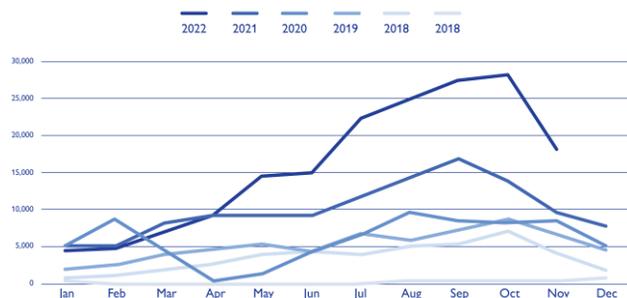


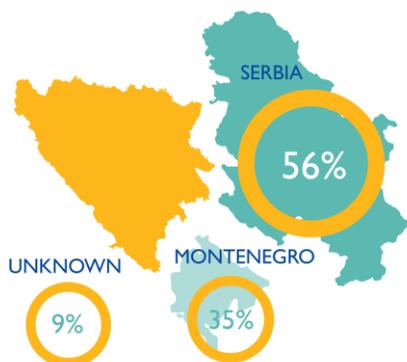
Figure 1 shows monthly migrant arrivals in the Western Balkans in the past five years. In total, authorities in the six Western Balkan countries have registered 174,194 migrants from January to November 2022⁴.

Key trends in BiH:

- From January to November 2022, the SFA has registered 24,813 migrants in Bosnia and Herzegovina⁵.
- In November, the SFA registered 2,722 new arrivals, a 50 per cent decrease of compared to October, consistent with seasonal trends as fewer migrants arrive in colder months.
- Migrants are spending fewer days in BiH before heading toward the border with Croatia. The average length of stay in TRCs has decreased from 53 days in January 2022 to 5 days in November 2022

55.6 per cent of respondents had entered BiH from Serbia, a 32.2 per cent drop from the previous round, while 34.9 per cent of respondents entered through Montenegro, an increase of 26.1 per cent from last month.

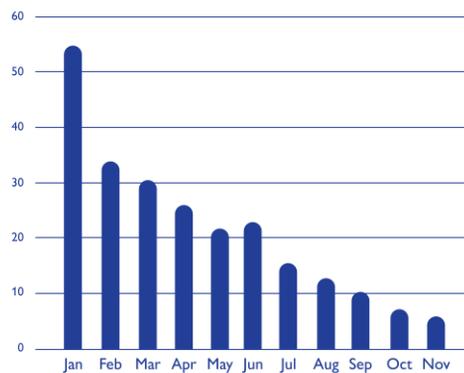
REPORTED COUNTRY OF ENTRY



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

5. Data is collected through Smart Camp, an online software used by the IOM and SFA to register migrants and their needs in TRCs.

Close to two-thirds (64.8%) of the migrants were found in outside locations, mostly at bus stations. Fewer numbers stayed at either paid (13.5%) or free (4.8%) private accommodation, or paid hostels (4%), while 4 per cent were found at abandoned buildings.



Overall, consistent with the previous round, a growing share of migrants have been found at transit locations such as bus stations and other outside locations. This suggests greater internal mobility of the migrant population. This is also in line with the average length of stay, in days, that migrants reside in TRCs, which has also been steadily decreasing in 2022.

GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

Most of the migrants were found in Una-Sana Canton (33.3%) and Sarajevo Canton (33.3%). This was followed by Republika Srpska (14.3%), Bosnian Podrinje (7.1%), Tuzla (6.4%), and Herzegovina-Neretva (5.6%). Although figures remain broadly consistent with the previous round, there has been a steady increase in the number of migrants present in the Republika Srpska, suggesting that migrants may be attempting border crossings in different locations in BiH. IOM did not find any migrants in Canton 10 or West Herzegovina.

HEALTH ISSUES AND VULNERABILITIES

The questionnaire captures information on specific individual conditions and vulnerable groups among the migrants. Unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) between the ages of 15 and 17 made up 7.9 per cent of the total population, while UASC under 15 consisted of 1.6 per cent. Women travelling alone, elderly persons over 60 and children under 5 in total represented 1.2 per cent of the total sample.

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, 6.3 per cent of people needed medical attention in the previous two weeks.

In this round, 8.7 per cent of the sample reported having medical problems. These problems were related to scabies and blisters on the feet as well as cuts, bruises and abrasions on the skin.



MIGRANT PRESENCE OUTSIDE RECEPTION

Bosnia and Herzegovina
08 December 2022

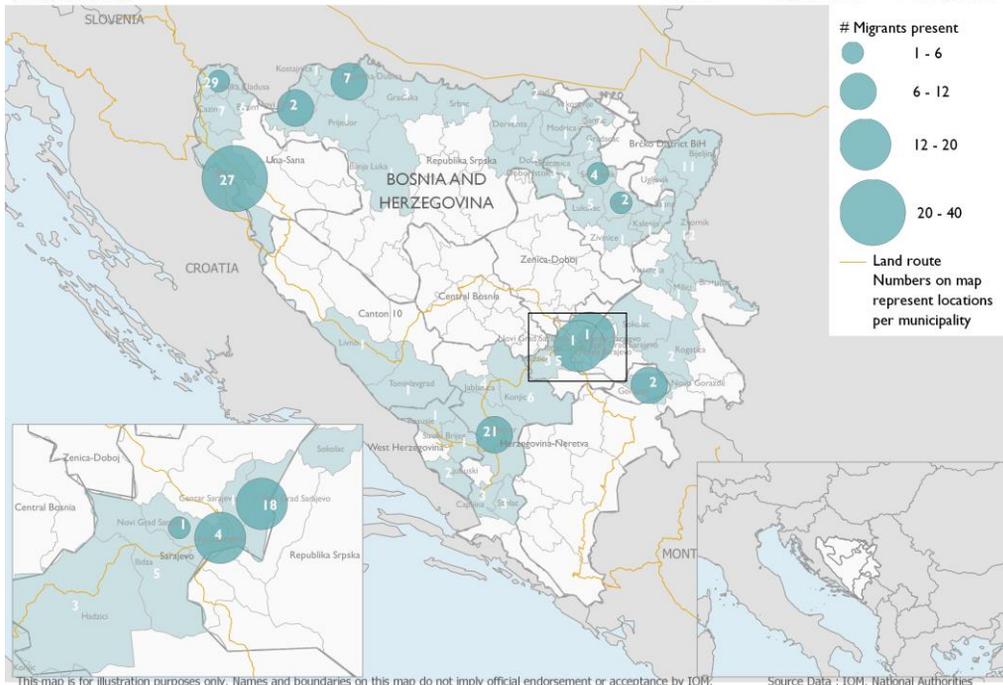
Est. **246** MIGRANTS OUTSIDE TRANSIT
RECEPTION CENTERS*

7
Cantons

237 Assessed locations in

6
Regions in RS

52
Municipalities



INTENDED DESTINATIONS

In round 17, half of the respondents stated that Germany was their intended country of destination, followed by France (14.3%), and Italy (14.3%). These top three countries were followed by Spain (8.7%) and Denmark (2.4%) This is broadly consistent with the previous round, with the exception of Spain, which is now in the top five.

As for the top three nationalities, 76.6 per cent of the Afghan nationals reported Germany as their intended country of destination, followed by France (10.9%) per cent and Italy (7.8%), and Denmark (4.6%). For Moroccan nationals, Italy (55.7%) and France (5.6%) were the countries of intended destination, while Cuban nationals wanted to travel to Spain (82%) and Germany (18%).



Picture 1. IOM enumerator speaking to migrants and asylum seekers residing outside the official TRCs in BiH.

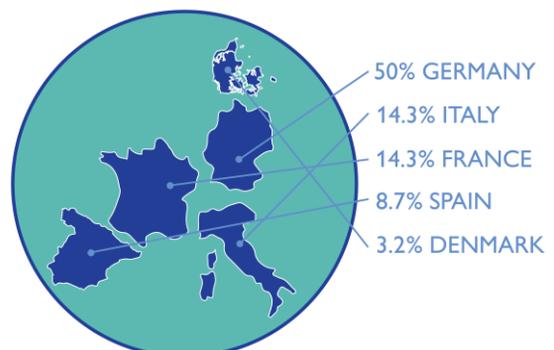
REFERRAL INFORMATION

Migrants move rapidly through BiH in an attempt to cross the border into the European Union. Only 6.3 per cent of the migrants expressed an interest in remaining in BiH with recognised legal status, residence permit, work permit and the possibility of family reunification.

In this round, 52.4 per cent of migrants had been in BiH for less than one month. Of these, 11 per cent reported having been in BiH for less than two weeks. This was followed by 4.7 per cent who reported spending between 31 days and three months, 20.6 per cent of respondents reported that they had stayed for between three and six months, while 14.2 per cent had been there for more than six months.

A majority (68.3%) of the respondents declared that they were aware of the option of voluntary return and assisted reintegration (AVRR) to their countries of origin.

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). These data have been collected since 2017 as part of the broader DTM Europe monitoring of mixed migration flows through the Western Balkan and the Mediterranean routes to Europe. Since 2021, DTM in BiH has also been collecting data on migrants' presence outside reception centres and individual Flow Monitoring Surveys with migrants in reception.

Design of the data collection – Round 17

Geographical coverage

In round 17, the IOM chose 52 municipalities in seven Cantons of the FBiH and in five regions of RS entity due to their well-known high presence of migrants. The total number of locations visited takes into account micro locations, which are unique locations with specific geo-referenced coordinates.

In total, the teams visited 237 locations in 52 different municipalities. In FBiH, the teams visited 69 locations in four municipalities in Una-Sana Canton, 32 locations in six municipalities in Sarajevo Canton, 26 locations in nine municipalities in Tuzla Canton, 37 locations in five municipalities in Herzegovina – Neretva Canton, four locations in three municipalities in West Herzegovina Canton, two locations in one municipality in Bosnian Podrinje Goražde Canton, two locations in two municipalities in Canton 10. In RS, the teams visited 65 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 17 was carried out on 8 December 2022.

Enumerators

Fifteen teams for a total of 33 enumerators (22 male, 11 female), with language skills in English, Arabic, Dari, Farsi, Turkish and Pashto, together with 15 staff from the Red Cross Society BiH (10 male, 5 female), 15 inspectors from SFA local staff (12 male, 3 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 the triple verification that is conducted by interviewing at least three key informants residing in the locations visited to obtain more accurate estimates. These key informants are migrants themselves and must be independent of each other. The reason for the introduction of this methodology is that the existing questionnaire, as it is structured, collects information at the stock level, carrying out group and not individual interviews, thus leading to possible inconsistencies.

This second methodology therefore makes it possible to estimate 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 126 individual migrants, and based on the data triangulation methodology, estimates the presence of 246 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.

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