

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH)

February 2021

10,824 asylum-seekers, refugees, and migrants arrived in the country since June 2020. Since the start of the mixed movement surge in January 2018, **70,856** arrivals have been recorded.

UNHCR is part of a working group established by the authorities to develop, by June 2021, a new **BiH Strategy on Migration and Asylum** and a **2021-2025 Action Plan**.

UNHCR trains authorities to enhance their capacity to **identify and refer potential asylum-seekers** and people with vulnerabilities, and to prioritize **strong asylum profiles** for registration.

POPULATION OF CONCERN

Refugees	5,238
Asylum-seekers	440
Internally displaced people	96,421
Stateless people	86
Other persons of concern	53,971

TOP THREE COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN

Refugee		Asylum-seekers	
Croatia	5,116	Iraq	144
Serbia and Kosovo: S/RES/1244...	59	Pakistan	67
Turkey	30	Afghanistan	47

Data source: UNHCR 2020 Mid-Year Statistical report and UNHCR [data finder platform](#)

HIGHLIGHTS

240

persons were awaiting resolution of their asylum claim at the end of February 2021

349

persons were awaiting registration of their asylum claim at the end of February 2021

11,776

Persons provided with information on the asylum system by UNHCR legal partner Vaša Prava BiH since June 2020.

Statelessness

802 cases of people at risk of statelessness were successfully resolved by UNHCR and partners since the beginning of UNHCR's global #IBelong campaign in 2014.

65 persons are still at risk of statelessness and are being assisted by UNHCR at the end of February 2021

COVID-19 PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

Direct assistance: UNHCR directly supports several persons of concern with protection-sensitive accommodation, food and hygiene parcels and ICT equipment for online schooling of children. UNHCR also supports authorities with asylum processes to mitigate challenges related to the pandemic.

Inclusion: It is plausible that persons who were granted protection status may have been included in the national vaccination plan, but this remains to be confirmed once vaccination roll-out begins. UNHCR and the UN continue advocating to ensure that refugees, asylum-seekers and people on the move are not left behind.

Communication with Communities: UNHCR and partners work to support two-way information exchange through information leaflets, the HELP website, peer-to-peer educators, focus group discussions and a call centre. During the pandemic, UNHCR introduced online counselling with families.



Legal Aid, support to BiH asylum system

UNHCR regularly provides information to potential asylum-seekers on access to the asylum system in BiH and, in cooperation with NGO Vaša Prava BiH, free legal aid during the process. *PHOTO: UNHCR/Vanes Pilav.*

Key Priorities

- **Access to Asylum:** UNHCR works to improve access to asylum, especially for individuals interested in asylum and who may likely be in need of international protection. We work to improve the quality of the asylum procedure (through the regional roll-out of the Quality Assurance Initiative) and strengthen capacities of the line Ministry of Security (staffing and training for asylum and registration officials, as well as strategic support in the working group for the new Migration and Asylum Strategy).
- **Solutions –** In support of BiH's pledges made at the 2019 Global Refugee Forum (GRF), we assist the Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees to enhance solutions for refugees, persons granted subsidiary protection, and beneficiaries of the Regional Housing Programme.
- **Statelessness:** UNHCR works with BiH authorities towards fulfilling the country's commitments at the High-Level Segment to end statelessness by 2024. UNHCR provides free legal aid for individuals at risk of statelessness and engages in advocacy and support to line authorities.

Working with Partners

- UNHCR works with the Ministry of Security, the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees, the border police and judiciary on asylum, international protection and integration. UNHCR is increasing support in 2021 to the Service for Foreigners' Affairs to enhance their first-line response capacity and supports authorities with trainings 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 Bosnia and Herzegovina Women's Initiative and Vaša Prava BiH. These partnerships ensure provision of protection services during the asylum process. UNHCR is establishing a new partnership with the INGO Catholic Relief Services that is focused on effective integration of refugees.

- UNHCR plays a leading role in the UN/inter-agency response to the mixed movement in BiH, with a focus on asylum. UNHCR supports the overall coordination, including protection (in support of referral pathways), 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.

Internally Displaced People

- **UNHCR** supports the realization of the Annex VII of the Dayton Peace Accords, providing legal support for access to rights. UNHCR is an active partner in the Regional Housing Programme, which secures comprehensive housing solutions for vulnerable returnees and IDPs. Sustainability of return or integration, in accordance with the country's GRF pledges is also in the focus of UNHCR in BiH.

Statelessness

- BiH is a party to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. There is no specific, national statelessness determination mechanism in place. Decisions are made on the basis of temporary residence on humanitarian grounds, in asylum procedure and within the revision of BiH citizenship. At the 2019 High-Level Segment on Statelessness, the country pledged to improve birth registration of all children, regardless of their parents' status, which has been partially achieved.

UNHCR Presence in BiH

Staff:

30 National Staff

8 International Staff

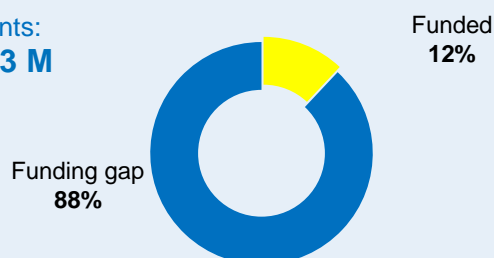
Offices:

1 Country Office in Sarajevo

1 Field Unit in Bihac

Financial information (28 February 2021)

Financial requirements:
USD 10.3 M



UNHCR is grateful to the major donors of unearmarked contributions* to the 2021 global programmes (293.8 USD, as of 28 February):

Norway 80 million | Sweden 66.9 million | Netherlands 36.1 million | Denmark 34.6 million | Germany 22.1 million | Switzerland 16.4 million | Private donors Spain 13.3 million | Ireland 12.5 million | Belgium 11.9 million

Private donors*Unearmarked contributions allow UNHCR for critical flexibility in how best to reach populations of concern who are in the greatest need and at the greatest risk. Above are donors of USD 10 million or more.

UNHCR BiH is also grateful for 2021 contributions from the following donors (as of 28 February):