



Bosnia and Herzegovina Crisis Response Plan 2020

2020

Funding Required

\$44,050,000

Target Beneficiaries

20,000

IOM Vision

In the context of the increased number of irregular migrants transiting through the country since the end of 2017, and of persons seeking asylum, IOM seeks to support the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) to effectively manage a functioning reception system (i.e. a system for accommodating and providing support for persons of concern from the moment of entry into, and their departure from, BiH) in line with international standards and that provides living conditions at an acceptable level, where the dignity of those accommodated is maintained and their basic needs met.

Context Analysis

In 2019, Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities registered 29,196 migrant arrivals. The composition of the migration flows is mixed, with top declared countries of origin being Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran and Syria. While the vast majority are single men, they also comprise families with children, unaccompanied and separated migrant children, and other vulnerable migrants.

While the number may seem modest in comparison to the overall flows along the Western Balkan route, especially in 2015 and 2016, IOM estimates that there are around 8,000 migrants in the country at any given time, mainly concentrated in Una-Sana Canton – in close proximity

to the border with EU Member State Croatia – with lesser numbers in transit in Sarajevo and Tuzla Cantons.

Thus far, the BiH authorities have struggled to adequately respond to the basic needs and human rights of migrants in the country. The situation, requiring a multi-level and multi-sectoral approach, has exposed the country's complex governance system.

In response, in support of BiH authorities, IOM has scaled up its operations across the country and has opened seven new temporary reception centres, providing safe, secure and dignified accommodation, food and other necessities, and where migrants can have access to a range of health and protection services.

However, with the current accommodation capacity at around 6,000, but with around 8,000 migrants and asylum seekers in the country, there is an urgent need to enhance accommodation and reception capacities.

The current mixed migration flow to BiH is unprecedented, and the continued presence of migrants and asylum seekers, combined with the COVID-19 pandemic and the growing use of nationalist and divisive rhetoric, could further exacerbate instability and fragility in the post-war country. Furthermore, the reception of migrants and asylum seekers have disproportionately been affecting communities in Una Sana Canton voicing concerns of constrained resources and insufficient support from the State. Due to the close proximity of persons in the centres, the COVID-19 pandemic remains at risk of escalating, even though it seems currently under control.

25 years after the end of the war, BiH continues to face major challenges including socioeconomic gridlock, corruption within a wide range of sectors, unresolved war-legacies, and youth disenfranchisement, which have created a conducive ground for the proliferation of violent extremist influences. Efforts to deepen or exploit communal tensions have had a direct influence on communities across BiH, and should be considered in the context of the relatively high number of BiH citizens, proportionate to its population, that left the country to participate in foreign conflicts. In addition, BiH saw a rise in ultra-nationalist rhetoric, further damaging social cohesion. In seeking to prevent relapse into conflict or violence, IOM works in over 20 local communities across the country empowering young people to become agents of positive change and supporting grass-root initiatives and youth networks to strengthen the resilience of local communities.

Coordination

On behalf of the United Nations Country Team (UNCT), IOM and UNHCR co-lead the response in support of the BiH authorities and in particular the Ministry of Security. This support covers both the provision of humanitarian assistance and the strengthening of the overall migration and asylum management in the country.

At the state level, the Operational Headquarters for Migration Issues, chaired by the Minister of Security, prepares and proposes measures, decisions and procedures for action for the Council of Ministers and other institutions and agencies and coordinates the response of all state actors involved in both the humanitarian and migration and asylum management response to the

current situation. Representatives of the entity-level and the Brcko District of BiH bodies for migration issues are participating in this forum. Una Sana Canton representatives are not members but are invited to participate in this body. Since 2018, IOM as the principal agency of the response participates in this body at the request of the Minister of Security of BiH. The body meets in on a bi-weekly basis, however recently, it has met less frequently.

IOM and UNHCR co-chair monthly Refugee and Migrant Response Coordination Meetings. This interagency group is open to all national and international governmental and non-governmental actors in the humanitarian response to the migrant and refugee situation and is the main venue for information exchange and coordination among international and civil society stakeholders. State-level authorities are routinely invited, as are Federation authorities as well as those from Sarajevo Canton and municipality.

IOM Capacity

IOM has been present in BiH since 1992. IOM has a longstanding partnership with the Government of BiH supporting the country in key migration management areas, including but not limited to counter smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings, border management, labour migration, and diaspora engagement.

In response to the increase in migrants and asylum seekers in BiH since the end of 2017, IOM has scaled up its field presence in Una Sana Canton significantly, first through the deployment of mobile protection and assistance teams, and in 2018, the first UN agency to open a field office in Bihac in Una Sana Canton.

The response is led by IOM's Country Emergency Coordinator, overseeing around 300 field staff members directly engaged in the migration response – the vast majority working in the seven temporary reception centres established and managed by IOM, on behalf of the Service for Foreigners' Affairs within the Ministry of Security of BiH. In these reception centres, IOM is the lead agency in the following sectors:

- Centre Coordination and Centre Management;
- Food Security and Nutrition;
- Shelter;
- Non-Food Items;
- Water, Sanitation and Hygiene;
- Transportation and Logistics.

IOM also works closely with UNHCR and UNICEF to mainstream protection in the migration response, while working to identify and address protection concerns in the centres, with particular attention given to gender-based violence, and trafficking in human beings. IOM also cooperates with the Danish Refugee Council, providing access to health services for migrants in all IOM centres, mainstreaming mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) into the overall response, including a comprehensive COVID-19 response (Please see: <https://www.iom.int/mhpsed>). Together with DRC, IOM established quarantine and isolation sectors in centres, provides testing, and basic on-site care, while suspected or confirmed cases are transported to local hospitals.

Supporting the Service for Foreigners' Affairs (the BiH Ministry of Security) in Centre Coordination and Centre Management (CCCM), IOM coordinates all activities and all actors/implementing partners providing services in the centres.

IOM, together with partner agencies, has established structures and mechanisms to promote migrants' participation in the daily life and operations of the centres, and established migrant/community structures and community representatives/leaders facilitating dialogues between migrant groups, and between migrants and centre management, and for migrants to be able to express concerns and emerging needs.

There are also reporting mechanisms established for migrants to report incidents of violence, exploitation or abuse, and other protection concerns, in their own language and anonymously.

Additionally, IOM provides support to the border police and the Service for Foreigners' Affairs to further strengthen their human and technical capacity to register irregular migrants and to proactively screen and identify those vulnerable to violence, exploitation and abuse.

Objective

Saving lives and protecting people on the move

\$41,050,000

Funding Required

20,000

Target Beneficiaries

Persons inside temporary reception centres who wish to register as asylum seekers with authorities and civil society organizations working with refugees and asylum seekers.

Camp coordination and camp management

Funding Required

\$19,000,000

Since the beginning of 2018, IOM, together with UNHCR, has led the response on behalf of the UN in BiH in light of the mixed asylum seeker and migrant profile of those in need of assistance, and in support of the responsible BiH institutions.

At the level of the BiH State Authorities, the Ministries in charge of accommodation for the migrants and asylum seekers in the country are the Ministry of Security through the Service for Foreigners Affairs, the Sector for Asylum and the Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees.

IOM supports the BiH State authorities in Centre Coordination and Centre Management (CCCM), including in (1) administration of centres; (2) coordination of centres; and (3) management of centres. This includes the provision of technical equipment, vehicles and registration software, alongside capacity building activities and the temporary deployment/relocation of officials to key border crossing points and migrant reception centres as well as significant investments in establishing new or upgrading/reconstructing existing

reception facilities to enhance the dignity and living conditions of migrants and asylum seekers.

IOM, together with UNHCR, supports the coordination of all reception centres in BiH. This role involves overall strategic and inter-centre operational coordination, covering issues such as setting strategy, setting standards (notably adhering to minimum humanitarian standards, as well as EU standards), contingency planning, information management, and coordinating the placement of migrants in reception centres, in a protection-sensitive manner.

In support of the BiH authorities who are currently leading/will be leading the direct management of each centre, IOM supports the management of the seven temporary reception centres, including the deployment of dedicated CCCM (centre managers, centre administrators and registration and centre assistants), cultural mediators, and security personnel present 24/7. The influx of migrants and asylum seekers, the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic to BiH, and changes in occupancy of the centres have led to increased need for CCCM support during this year.

IOM CCCM staff organize weekly CCCM meetings with the participation of all partners and service providers present in the centre to enhance the coordination within each centre. IOM CCCM staff also work to increase the participation and accentuality of the migrant population and has together with partners established community structures, complaint and feedback mechanisms, as well as centre-specific standard operating procedures for a more predictable and transparent response.

In these roles, IOM works closely with UNHCR, UNICEF and the Danish Refugee Council, mainstreaming mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) in CCCM and the general humanitarian response. IOM CCCM staff refer migrants in need of protection and health services, including MHPSS services/activities.

Basic needs, including food and multi-purpose cash assistance

Funding Required

\$8,000,000

IOM, together with the implementing partners Red Cross and the local NGO Pomozi.ba, provide food for migrants and asylum seekers accommodated in the seven temporary reception centres, as well as the state-managed Refugee Reception Centre Salakovac. IOM supports the preparation and distribution of three meals per day – breakfast, lunch and dinner – and two snacks according to set standard menus that ensure sufficient nutritional value and daily calorie intake.

IOM also supports the running and maintenance of ‘open kitchens’ in the temporary reception centres allowing migrants and asylum seekers to cook their own food.

While UNICEF and its implementing partners are operating Mother and Baby Corners, advising on nutrition and provision of age-appropriate food to children as well as screening all children aged 6-59 months for undernutrition, IOM will be providing complementary food and nutrition to children, in cases where mothers are unable to breastfeed, or children/infants and mothers, which for other reasons are in need of complementary food/nutrition.

Provision of water, sanitation and hygiene in emergencies

Funding Required

\$1,200,000

In the seven temporary reception centres, which host up to 6,000 migrants and asylum seekers per day, IOM provides basic water, sanitation and hygiene services. This includes safe drinking water, either through connection to the public water supply or through water cistern/tanks and the provision of toilets and showers in accordance to minimum standards (SPHERE/EASO Guidance on reception conditions, operational standards and indicators), separated by gender and with adapted facilities for persons with disabilities. Currently, the existing WASH systems have to be maintained, while expanding capacities further to account for the COVID-19 related distancing rules which place a strain on current capacities.

Shelter and settlements

Funding Required

\$11,000,000

In addition to the state-managed Refugee Reception Centre Salakovac and the Asylum Reception Centre Delijas, IOM provides safe, dignified and secure shelter to migrants and asylum seekers in seven temporary reception centres.

With a total capacity of around 6,000 beds, and with an estimated migrant population of around 8,000 at any given time, there is still a need to increase the country's accommodation capacity to offer safe, dignified and secure shelter to migrants. This can be achieved either through the expansion of the existing temporary reception centres, through the opening of new sites, or both.

The expansion of the current temporary reception centres would require reconstructions works, and an upscaling of existing infrastructure, in particular with electricity/heating. The opening of a new site, depending on the conditions, would at a minimum require interior/furniture and the activation/re-connection of basic infrastructure for electricity, water supply, gas, sewage, etc.

Migrants and asylum seekers, both those within and those residing outside temporary reception centres, are in need of cultural, gender and age-sensitive non-food items (NFIs), including hygiene/dignity/women kits, clothes and other necessities, including winter clothes (jackets, raincoats, hats, and gloves) and additional blankets and sleeping bags during winter. While IOM and partners receive donations with NFIs, these are on an ad-hoc basis, and this sector remains underfunded for 2020.

Displacement Tracking for Humanitarian Response

Funding Required

\$350,000

To improve the understanding of migrants' profiles in BiH and the Western Balkans region, IOM aims to continue rolling out its Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) methodology. Since 2015, the DTM regional team collects information on newly arrived migrants and refugees registered by the authorities or counted by IOM field colleagues. To better understand the capacities and the changing situation in the country, DTM initiated the collection of data in mid-2016 related to occupancy and capacity rates in the reception centres providing humanitarian community and interested public with information on the gaps in the reception systems and responses. Dispersed movements in the Western Balkan region and limited availability of data on irregular border crossings represented a challenge in tracking new arrivals in some of the countries. Available information from the field indicated that most of the migrants seek assistance in the reception centres, therefore this challenge was solved by tracking the number of newly arrived migrants in the facilities or unofficial sites - which was then taken as a reliable proxy for estimates on the velocity of population movements.

Needs/actions:

- Increase capacity of IOM field staff and national level counterparts to carry out site assessments (data collection and regular reporting);
- Capacity building for country offices to increase information management capacities for gathering timely data on migrants needs and subsequently ensure a better link between findings and operational response;
- Comprehensive analysis of trends of migrants profiles, vulnerabilities and needs, such as vulnerability to human trafficking and other exploitative practices, and mental health and psychosocial support needs.

Multi-sectoral support

Funding Required

\$0

Includes funding which supports multi-sectoral interventions or cannot be attributed to a specific activity area.

Protection

Funding Required

\$1,500,000

While UNHCR leads efforts for persons who seek protection in BiH, IOM supports logistically persons inside reception centres to register with authorities and will support local civil society who work with refugees and asylum seekers.

Objective

Driving solutions to displacement

\$3,000,000

Funding Required

7,500

Target Beneficiaries

IOM will target local communities with low or deteriorating social cohesion, institutions dedicated to providing Mental Health and Psycho-social support (MHPSS), Civil Society Organizations, and educational institutions (schools, universities, institutes), for an all-of-society approach to improve social cohesion.

IOM will directly support and work with youth, families, marginalized community members, religious, cultural, and education leaders, and individuals facing socio-economic stressors.

Mental health and psychosocial support in transition and recovery

Funding Required

\$1,000,000

The COVID-19 Pandemic has adversely affected the mental health and psychosocial wellbeing, economic wellbeing, and the social cohesiveness of many communities in the Western Balkan region. To ensure social-cohesion building recovery, it is key to support civil society in efforts to provide localized MHPSS. Local civil society organizations will be introduced with innovative ways of providing MHPSS to host communities. IOM aims to widen the scope of service provision apart from traditional providers (medical institutions and mental health centers) and expand the focus to include schools, universities, local NGOs, the private sector and other institutions that communities interact with on a daily basis.

Peacebuilding and peace preservation

Funding Required

\$2,000,000

Programming seeks to address weak social cohesion as one of the primary drivers of the rise in violent extremism recruitment seen since 2014, as well as conflict spurred by the rise in ultra-nationalist rhetoric. Social cohesion building, in the context of crisis prevention, must be addressed through empowering local actors – local communities, youth, families, marginalized community members, religious, cultural, and education leaders – and adopting tailored approaches, including those sensitive to local cultures and religious beliefs.

Crisis prevention hence calls for the support of efforts placing emphasis on local ownership and contributing and reinforcing long-term efforts aimed at strengthening the resilience and social cohesion of communities in BiH. Working across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, the response contributes to strengthening community capacity to respond to threats to sustainable social cohesion. Further, this approach would provide community members with opportunities for a productive outlet to facilitate just and equitable economic and social development. At the same time, the rise of climate and ecological issues cannot be ignored as a factor of deterioration of social cohesion. As such, it is necessary to move towards the integration of the green transition principles in all medium and long term crisis prevention strategies, whenever appropriate.

OPERATIONAL PRESENCE

7
International staff and
affiliated work force

475
National staff and affiliated
work force

4
IOM Field Offices