

www.ifrc.org
Saving lives,
changing minds.

Information bulletin

Bosnia and Herzegovina: Population movement

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Date of issue: 12 June 2018	
Date of disaster: Ongoing since late 2017	Point of contact: Seval Guzelkilinc, Disaster Management Coordinator IFRC Regional Office for Europe Phone : +36 1 888 45 05; email: seval.guzelkilinc@ifrc.org
Host National Society: Red Cross Society of Bosnia and Herzegovina	

This bulletin is being issued for information only and reflects the current situation and details available at this time. The Red Cross Society of Bosnia and Herzegovina (RCS BiH) is coordinating closely with government authorities, and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) to respond to the needs of affected populations. In view of the humanitarian needs, an operation supported by the IFRC Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) is being considered by the National Society.

The situation

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) has been experiencing, particularly since 2015, a small number of migrant arrivals, but their numbers steeply increased in the end of 2017 and the beginning of 2018.

As migrants are arriving to BiH via two different routes – one going through Turkey, Greece, Albania and Montenegro, and the other through Turkey, Greece, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Bulgaria and Serbia – their presence is recorded mostly in urban areas.

From the beginning of the year until 31 May 2018, according to the information received from the Ministry of Security of BiH, 5,664 people have entered the country and have been registered by the government. There is a chance that a small number of people managed to enter to the country without being registered. The number of daily entries varies from 70 to 100. 20 per cent of migrants were registered by the border police, while 80 per cent were referred to registration by the regular police or applied to be registered themselves.

After being registered, migrants may declare an intention to seek asylum, after which they are free to stay in the country for 14 days. Out of the 5,664 people registered, 5,065 declared the intention to seeking asylum, but only 437 asked for asylum in BiH. This means that most of the migrants do not intend to stay in the country but are planning to move further to EU countries.

Since the route from BiH towards EU countries goes through Croatia, migrants attempting to leave BiH are found mainly in the north-western areas of BiH: around Bihać, Cazin and Velika Kladuša, which are a part of Una-Sana Canton.



RCS BiH Mostar branch distributing food to migrants in Salakovac. Photo: RCS BiH

Migrants rarely spend more than 24 hours in one location, except for Bihać and Velika Kladuša, which serve both as transit areas and places of prolonged stay. Crossing to Croatia is difficult and therefore most migrants have been unable to make it and are now staying in the area of Una-Sana Canton.

Dozens of people are forced to sleep rough, without reliable access to most basic services such as food, water, hygiene and sanitation. The most urgent concerns are focused around provision of shelter, food and related legal issues.

Most migrants are coming from Pakistan and Syria, with others arriving from Afghanistan, Iran and Iraq among other countries. Some 90 per cent of the population are men aged from 18 to 27 years. A small number of families has also been registered, mostly coming from Iran. 59 unaccompanied minors were found in the country – all of whom have been reconnected with their families, with some children taken back to their home countries.

BiH is the most mine contaminated country in Europe. Some landmine fields are still active, also in the areas where migrants are trying to cross the border. According to the data of the Mine Action Centre in BiH (BHMAL), the size of mine-suspected area in BiH is 1,091 square kilometres or 2.2 per cent of the total area of the country. Locations of the land mines are often unknown, even to the local population, which poses a serious safety and security hazard to the migrants. The general assessment of the impact of mines/explosive remnants of war (ERW) in 129 municipalities in BiH has identified 1,398 affected communities impacted by mines/ERW.

The Council of Ministers of BiH has mandated the Coordination Body for Migration in BiH to be activated in full capacity, after the increase in the number of entries into BiH. In addition to that body, the UNHCR office in BiH is holding regular coordination meetings with all humanitarian actors.

Some 2,000 migrants are currently in the **Una-Sana Canton (Bihać and Velika Kladuša municipalities)**, close to the border with Croatia. Authorities are planning to accommodate up to 1,500 migrants in a former storage facility in Velika Kladusa. The IOM jointly with BiH Ministry of Security is to undertake an assessment of the facility to clarify what needs to be done to create appropriate conditions.

With the support of the UNHCR, hostels in **Sarajevo** are accommodating close to 200 migrants, while around 120 are residing in temporary shelters run by volunteer groups and local citizens.

The **asylum centre in Delijaš** is the only facility in BiH dedicated for accommodation of people in need of international protection. It currently provides shelter to 115 people. Despite the efforts of camp management to separately accommodate families, they often share rooms with single men, which causes security concerns, and often results in families leaving the centre. Operations in the centre are run by the Ministry of Security of BiH.

The Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees activated a **refugee centre in Salakovac**, near Mostar, on 18 May and accommodated near 250 migrants in the facility. The centre is a solid building with all the necessary infrastructure. The number of migrants residing in the centre, however, is getting smaller every day. They leave the centre and seek transportation further to Croatia on their own. Currently, the number of migrants in the centre is around 100.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The Red Cross Society of BiH (RCS BiH) participates in coordination meetings at the UNHCR office in Sarajevo and in regular exchange of information regarding the current and planned response to the migrant situation in BiH. The RCS BiH is also participating in the work of Coordination Body for Migrations, which is coordinated by the Council of Ministers and the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees of BiH.

Due to the large number of mines and unexploded ordnance (UXO), and to prevent mine incidents, the RCS BiH, with support of ICRC and in cooperation with the BHMAL, produced 11,000 mine awareness flyers with a warning on the danger of mines and UXO in the area of Trebinje (southern BiH), Velika Kladusa, Cazin and Bihac (north-western BiH). The flyers are being distributed by the Red Cross volunteers who stock the flyers in visible places such as bulletin boards, telephone poles and other suitable sites in the border areas.

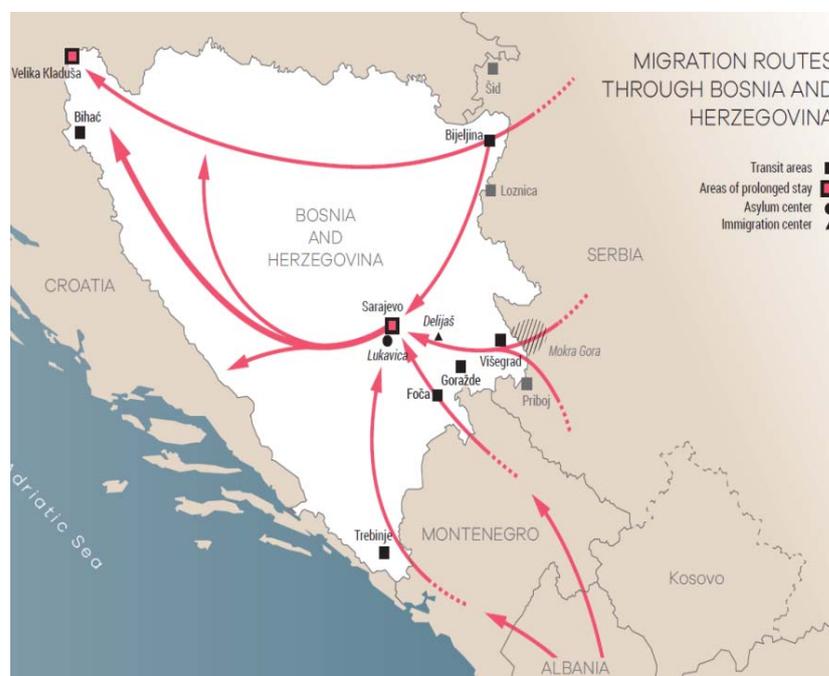
Due to the increased number of migrants in BiH, the RCS BiH Tracing Service, in their capacity of a member of the Restoring Family Links Network of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, has committed to the Tracing Service capacity building, and is responding to the needs of migrants.

Over the last three years, with ICRC support, the Tracing Service has developed, printed and distributed RFL kits containing equipment and special RFL materials to be used to prevent separation of families and to promote the Restoring Family Links (RFL) services. These include an information leaflet about the RFL services, an information leaflet on prevention of separation of family members, as well as instructions and guidelines for all those engaged in RFL.

In cooperation with ICRC, another 1,000 copies of posters, information leaflets and other materials intended for migrants, as well as non-governmental and governmental organizations, including Service for Foreigner's Affairs as well as the information centres and teams of IOM and UNHCR, are being printed. The distribution will be carried out during the refresher training on the RFL services and RFL needs assessment in the affected areas, planned for the period between 18 and 22 June.

The RCS BiH has been mandated to provide food and warm meals and distribute humanitarian goods in organized accommodation for migrants as well as to distribute hygiene items. The RCS BiH was the only agency providing health care at the beginning of the operation. Various branches of the National Society are involved as follows:

- Red Cross Bosnia Podrinje Canton in Gorazde provides basic humanitarian assistance to migrants, including food and water supplies, blankets and mats, psycho-social support (PSS).
- City Red Cross of Bihać has been given responsibility to feed migrants through the Public Kitchen (distribution of up to 650 hot meals a day) and to distribute hygiene items. Other responsibilities of the City Red Cross Bihać include provision of PSS and deployment of logistic teams and first aid-medical personnel to support health centres.
- City Red Cross of Mostar is providing warm meals in the refugee centre in Salakovac, along with distribution of non-food items (NFI). In addition, they provide PSS and first aid in the centre.



Population movement through Bosnia and Herzegovina. Source: Refugee Aid Serbia

Communications

The National Society, its local branches and IFRC have been working to highlight the response efforts across social media and media channels. IFRC President Francesco Rocca gave [an interview](#) to Aljazeera Balkans, recognizing the great work of Red Cross staff and volunteers in the region. IFRC Regional Office for Europe is continually sharing updates through its [Europe Twitter account](#) and further media outreach is planned.

Contact information

For further information, specifically related to this emergency, please contact:

In the Red Cross Society of Bosnia and Herzegovina:

- Nemanja Zekic, Acting Disaster Management Coordinator;
phone: + 387 33 263 935; mobile phone: + 387 62 655 342; email: nemanja@rcsbh.org

In the IFRC Regional Office for Europe:

- Seval Guzelkilinc, Disaster Management Coordinator,
phone: +36 1 888 45 05, mobile phone: +36 70 430 65 02; email: seval.guzelkilinc@ifrc.org
- Nora Peter, Sr Communications Officer,
mobile phone: +36 70 265 4020; email: nora.peter@ifrc.org



Click [here](#) to return to the title page

How we work

All IFRC assistance seeks to adhere to the **Code of Conduct** for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) in Disaster Relief and the **Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response (Sphere)** in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. The IFRC's vision is to inspire, **encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities** by National Societies, with a view to **preventing and alleviating human suffering**, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.

The IFRC's work is guided by Strategy 2020 which puts forward three strategic aims:



Save lives,
protect livelihoods,
and strengthen recovery
from disaster and crises.



Enable **healthy**
and **safe** living.



Promote **social inclusion**
and a culture of
non-violence and peace.