

**Save the Children**

**REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS AT THE WESTERN BALKANS ROUTE**

# **REGIONAL OVERVIEW**

**JULY – SEPTEMBER 2018**

**Balkans Migration and Displacement Hub**  
**Data and Trends Analysis**

# Balkans Migration and Displacement Hub

## Data and Trends Analysis

# IMPRESSUM

Every child has the right to a future. Save the Children works in North West Balkans and around the world to give children a healthy start in life, and the chance to learn and be safe. We do whatever it takes to get children the things they need – every day and in times of crisis.

### Acknowledgements

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***Boy from Iran photographed in a refugee reception centre in Southern Serbia.***

Tell us what you think about our work or ask for more information:

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**Mixed migrations flows continue on the Balkans route. About 16,000 refugees and migrants are estimated to have arrived to the Balkans countries during the third quarter of 2018 which makes it the second most travelled migration route to Europe**

Figures from Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia, Kosovo\*,<sup>1</sup> Romania, FYROM, Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina indicate that the Western Balkans is one of the most travelled migration routes in Europe. During the third quarter of the year, 13,573 new refugees and migrants were registered in Greece, while Save the Children identified 4,949 new arrivals in Serbia, out of which 1,132 were by plane. During the same period, 1,199 new refugees and migrants were identified in Bulgaria, 1,518 were recorded as transiting through FYROM, while 635 people applied for international protection in Romania. In addition, 1,612 new arrivals were identified in Albania, 8,492 in Bosnia and Herzegovina and 190 in Kosovo\*. The fact that many different routes are used and the comparison of demographic data indicate that these figures do not overlap completely. In addition, the available data does not capture all irregular migrants, particularly those who are avoiding police registration. Based on these indicators, we estimate that at least 16,000 refugees and migrants arrived to the region in the period from July to September of 2018.

**The route through Bosnia and Herzegovina became one of the most travelled in the Western Balkans**

Transit corridors from Bulgaria/FYROM and Serbia as well as through Albania and Montenegro merge in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The data shows that refugees and migrants transiting through the Western Balkans region are moving towards Bosnia and Herzegovina where they try to cross the border with Croatia and continue towards Western European countries.

**More than 74,000 refugees and migrants are currently present in the Balkans countries**

The number of people accommodated in reception centres, at external addresses and unofficial shelters in the Balkans countries is estimated to be around 74,000. Most of them are present in Greece (about 65,000), Bosnia and Herzegovina (about 4,000), Serbia (3,900) and Bulgaria (1,169), while several hundreds of are accommodated in Romania (497), FYROM (73) and Albania.

**Children make about one-third of all refugees and migrants transiting through the Balkans with many of them travelling alone**

The available data on the number of refugee and migrants transiting through the Balkans shows that the proportion of children in the total migrant population fluctuated between 5% and 37%. The percentage of unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) in the overall number of children varies from country to country, oscillating from 8% in FYROM to 77% in Serbia, indicating that some children remain invisible and that there are significant differences in identification procedures. The vast majority of UASC are boys from Afghanistan and Pakistan. It is important to note that reliable data on refugees and migrants disaggregated by age and sex were not available for Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

# Balkans Migration and Displacement Hub

## Data and Trends Analysis

### KEY TRENDS

**For the first time since the beginning of the refugee crisis Syrians are not the most represented nationality among the new arrivals to Greece**

Since the beginning of the refugee crisis in 2015, most of the refugees and migrants that arrived to Greece were Syrians. Namely, in 2015 Syrians made 55% of new arrivals to Greece, in 2016 proportion of Syrians was 47%, while in 2017 it was 42%. This trend was stable till end of the second quarter of 2018. However, according to the UNCHR data, in period July – September 2018, most of the new arrivals to island were made by refugees and migrants from Afghanistan (38%), Syria (17%) and Iraq (16%).

**The Balkans route is the main migration route for refugees and migrants from Syria, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan**

The demographic data on refugees and migrants in Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia, Romania, FYROM, Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina shows that the Balkans route is dominantly travelled by refugees and migrants from Syria, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan. On the other side, the Central and Western Mediterranean route is mostly used by refugees and migrants from African countries, and in a small percent by those from Syria, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan.



# Balkans Migration and Displacement Hub

## Data and Trends Analysis

# MIGRATION ROUTES



### Greece

Both, sea and land routes are used by refugees and migrants to enter Greece, while on the exit side, they are heading towards Albania and Macedonia.

### Bulgaria

The vast majority of refugees and migrants enter Bulgaria from south-east, namely by crossing the border with Turkey and Greece. On the other side of the country, the strongest pressure is on the borders with Serbia and Romania.

### FYROM

FYROM is mainly used as a corridor between Greece and Serbia. Refugees and migrants enter FYROM from Greece and most of them head north trying to cross the border with Serbia.

### Albania

Albania is a transit country. It is part of the migration corridor which goes from Greece, through Albania and Montenegro towards Bosnia and Herzegovina.

### Kosovo\*

Refugees and migrants enter Kosovo\* from the east, namely FYROM and move towards Serbia or Montenegro.

### Serbia

The vast majority of refugees and migrants enter Serbia from Bulgaria and FYROM. In addition, as a result of visa liberalisation policy, increased number of people from Iran arriving to Serbia by plane. Exit routes from Serbia are going through Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Hungary and Romania.

### Romania

Most of refugees and migrants arrived to Romania from Serbia, while a small number of them entered from Bulgaria. The main exit point from the country is the north-west border with Hungary.

### Bosnia and Herzegovina

The most of refugees and migrants enter Bosnia and Herzegovina from Serbia or from Montenegro. Within the country, they move north, north-west or south where they are trying to cross the border with Croatia.

### CONTINUOUS INFLUX AND ONWARD MOVEMENT

According to the UNHCR data, 13,573 refugees and migrants arrived in Greece during the third quarter of 2018 which made the Balkans route the second most travelled migration route to Europe in the period from July to September 2018.<sup>2</sup> The majority of registered refugees and migrants (about 9,700 or 71%) arrived by sea, while more than 3,850 refugees and migrants entered Greece by crossing the land border from north-east. Compared to the first six months of the year, the number of sea arrivals increased, while entries via the land route remained at the same level. The data shows the monthly average of sea arrivals for January - June 2018 at 2,286, while during the last three months it increased to 3,234 persons a month.

**13,573**  
refugees and  
migrants arrived in  
Greece during the  
third quarter of  
2018

The number of people of concern in Greece increased from 59,700 recorded at the end of June 2018 to 64,900 at the end of the third quarter.

According to the National Coordination Centre for Border Control, Immigration and Asylum, over 20,000 of refugees and migrants were present on the islands (report from 10 September), while the total accommodation capacities included about 9,000 places. The situation was especially difficult in the reception and identification centres on Lesbos with the total

capacity of 3,000 places but accommodating more than 8,700 people; and on Samos with the total capacity of about 650 places but accommodating almost 4,000 refugees and migrants.<sup>3</sup>



**Over 20,000 of refugees and migrants were present on the islands, while the total accommodation capacities included about 9,000 places**

The data shows that there were about 3,400 unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) in Greece at the end of September, with about one-third accommodated in shelters for UASC or Supported Independent Living (SIL) apartments. This left more than 2,300 of UASC in need of adequate shelter. Some of UASC were in protective custody or were placed in safe zones, hotels (emergency accommodation), reception and identification centres or open accommodation facilities, and about 1,000 UASC were reported as living in informal housing arrangements, on the streets (reported as homeless), or with their location unknown.<sup>4</sup>

### DEMOGRAPHY

The reports on sea arrivals for the period from July to September 2018, provide an insight on the demography of refugees and migrants arriving in Greece.<sup>5</sup> Out of 9,702 refugees and migrants arriving by sea, 63% were adults (men 3,818; women 2,278), while

# Balkans Migration and Displacement Hub

## Data and Trends Analysis

37% were children (boys 2,144; girls 1,462). About 17% of newly arrived refugee and migrant children travelled alone, mostly from Syria and Afghanistan.

Regarding the country of origin, during the third quarter of 2018, the sea route was mostly used by refugees and migrants from Afghanistan (38%), Syria (17%) and Iraq (16%). Compared to the first six months of the year, the data shows that the proportion of refugees and migrants from Afghanistan among the arrivals increased significantly, from 13% to 38%, while those from Syria decreased from 38% to 17%.

### Refugees and migrants by country of origin (N=9,702)



**During the third quarter of 2018, the sea route was mostly used by refugees and migrants from Afghanistan, Syria and Iraq**

As in previous reporting period, the statistics show that these three nationalities mostly travel in family groups. A similar trend for travelling in family groups was recorded for Syrians and Iraqis in other Balkans countries, but not for Afghans. According to the data from other countries in the Balkans, refugees and migrants from Afghanistan were dominantly men and teenage boys. Possible explanations of this variance could include the different background of refugees and migrants using the land and sea routes (for example, different provinces of origin, ethnicity, religion, status, wealth); divergent smuggling schemes; a decision to separate the family, with women and children staying Greece, while men continue the journey alone through the Balkans towards western and northern Europe. At this moment, these are only assumptions that would need to be verified or refuted

through a thorough research. Meanwhile, Save the Children will systematically monitor this trend and report on it.

## MIGRATION ROUTES

Throughout the period from July to September 2018, refugees and migrants used both the sea and land routes to enter Greece. The main entry points for the sea route were islands close to the Turkish coast, namely Lesvos, Samos, Chios and the Dodecanese islands.

During this period, 59 persons died or went missing while crossing the sea. This is a significant increase when compared to 48 refugees and migrants registered as dead or missing in the previous six months while trying to enter Greece by sea.<sup>6</sup>

The main land route used by refugees and migrants is at the crossing the river Evros. Even though this is not a new route, during the first half of 2018 it was increasingly used by refugees and migrants, and the number of new arrivals through the land route greatly outnumbered previous years. According to the available data, 3,871 new crossings were registered during the third quarter of 2018, about the same as in the previous quarter.

**more than  
3,800  
refugees and migrants  
entered the Greece by  
crossing the land  
border**

Even though Greece is an EU country, many refugees and migrants continue their journey towards western and northern Europe. The well-established exit route, extensively travelled since the beginning of the migration crisis, heads north towards FYROM and Serbia. The use of other routes also intensified since the beginning of the year. According to data from Bulgaria, there was an increase in entries from Greece compared to previous year. In addition, a new route from Greece, through Albania and Montenegro, towards Bosnia and Herzegovina also emerged in the last six months. Finally, some refugees and migrants use the sea route towards Italy.

# BULGARIA

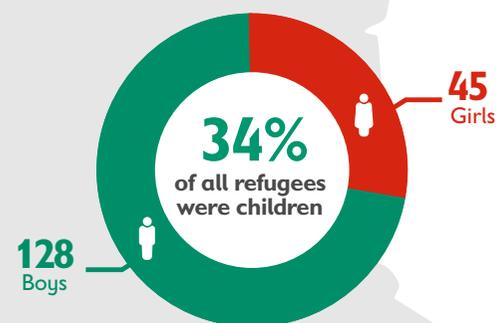
## MIGRATION FLOW

During the third trimester of 2018, the Bulgarian police apprehended 1,199 people that were accused of illegally entering the country.<sup>7</sup> This was a major increase compared to the first six months of the year when the total of 718 refugees and migrants were arrested. However, the increased number of arrivals did not lead to a substantial increase of number of people accommodated in Bulgaria. During the reporting period, the number of refugees and migrants reported to be in official centres or at “external addresses”<sup>8</sup> increased only by 173 people (from 996 reported in June to 1,169 in September). The Ministry of Interior further reports that 226 migrants were either deported or they left Bulgaria legally during the third quarter of 2018. For the “missing” 800, we can only assume that they have irregularly continued their journey towards Western Europe.

**1,199**  
people were  
apprehended for  
illegally entering  
the country

## DEMOGRAPHY

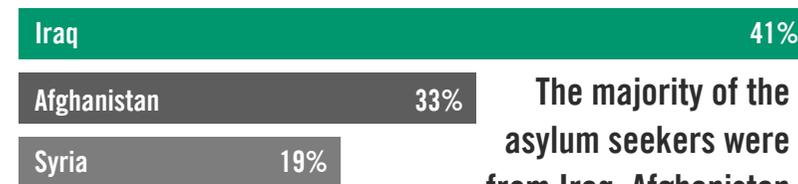
For July-August 2018, the Bulgarian State Agency for Refugees reported that 509 persons applied for international protection. This number includes 336 (66%) adults (279 men; 57 women) and 173 (34%) children (128 boys; 45 girls). According to the official statistics, 105 (39%) of children that have applied for international protection were traveling alone, most of them from Afghanistan and Iraq.



**39%**  
of all identified  
children were  
UASC

The majority of the asylum seekers were from Iraq (41%), Afghanistan (33%) and Syria (19%). The applicants from Iraq and Syria included a more balanced number of men, women and children indicating that many of them travel in family groups. The applicants from Afghanistan were predominantly men and teenage boys (more than 95%).

### Refugees and migrants by country of origin (N=509)



The majority of the  
asylum seekers were  
from Iraq, Afghanistan  
and Syria.

# Balkans Migration and Displacement Hub

## Data and Trends Analysis

# BULGARIA

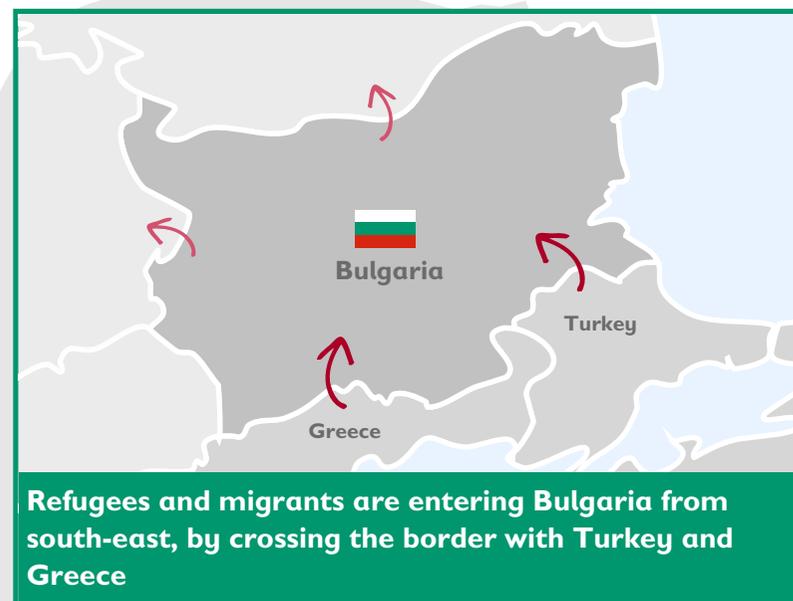
If we compare this with the asylum statistics from the second quarter of 2018, we see a decrease in the proportion of asylum seekers from Syria by 16 percentage points and an increase in the proportion of the Iraqi arrivals from 25% to 41% of all applicants.

Even though large percentage of asylum seekers in Bulgaria are Afghanis, only few of them are granted international protection. As reported in the January – June 2018 Regional Overview, of 419 asylum seekers who were granted refugee status or subsidiary protection, 22 (5%) were from Afghanistan. As a comparison, out of 1,704 people who were granted international protection in 2017, only 22 (1.5%) were from Afghanistan. This trend has continued throughout the third quarter of the year. During this period, out of 149 asylum seekers who were granted refugee or subsidiary protection 9 (6%) were from Afghanistan.

### MIGRATION ROUTES

The Bulgarian Ministry of Interior also provides data on where irregular migrants were apprehended. The locations are divided into three categories: (1) borders of entry, namely the borders with Turkey and Greece; (2) in-country, meaning that people were arrested somewhere within the country; (3) borders of exit, namely north and west borders with Serbia and Romania. Even though this data does not capture the overall migration flow it gives us clues about cross-border migratory routes.

According to the available data, the vast majority of refugees and migrants entered the country from south-east, namely by crossing the border with Turkey (51%) and Greece (40%). As in the first six months of the year, the data shows that the pressure on the border between Greece and Bulgaria continued to be high suggesting that this route is still active.



The data also shows a significant pressure on the west and north borders, suggesting that many refugees and migrants continue their journey through Serbia (about 57%) and Romania (about 35%). To enter Serbia from Bulgaria, the vast majority of refugees and migrants use smuggling routes through the mountains, while to enter Romania, refugee and migrants attempt to cross at the official border crossings.

## INCREASED IRREGULAR FLOW

From July to September 2018, authorities in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) registered 1,518 newly arrived refugees and migrants. This is a major increase compared to the first six months of the year when in total 1,098 new arrivals were registered.<sup>9</sup>

**1,518**  
newly arrived  
refugees and  
migrants were  
registered

The irregular flow through the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) can also be observed from the data collected in Serbia. According to the Save the Children and its partners in Serbia, from July to September 2018 about 2,250 new refugees and migrants were identified as arrivals from FYROM.

According to the available data, there were 73 refugees and migrants accommodated in reception/transit centres and the safe house in FYROM at the end of September.

## DEMOGRAPHY

During the first nine months of 2018, the authorities registered 2,616 newly arrived refugees and migrants in FYROM, of whom 80% were adults (three-quarters were men) and 20% were children. The data shows that 8% of registered children travelled alone.

**20%** of registered refugees and migrants were children

In a major change, most of the recorded new arrivals were from Iran (56%) suggesting increased movement from Iran not only driven by a visa-free regime with Serbia. Besides Iranians, the authorities registered refugees and migrants from Afghanistan (11%), Pakistan (10%) and Iraq (7%).

Refugees and migrants by country of origin (N=1,518)



The majority of identified refugees and migrants were Iranians, Afghans, Pakistanis and Iraqis.

## MIGRATION ROUTES

The data suggests that the migration route through FYROM is mainly used as a corridor between Greece and Serbia. Refugees and migrants enter FYROM from Greece and most of them head north trying to cross the border with Serbia.

In addition to the route towards Serbia, some of the refugees and migrants move west using the route through Albania or Kosovo\*.

However, the data also indicate some reverse movement. Beside new arrivals coming from the south, some of the refugees and migrants identified in FYROM are returning from Serbia and heading south towards Greece.

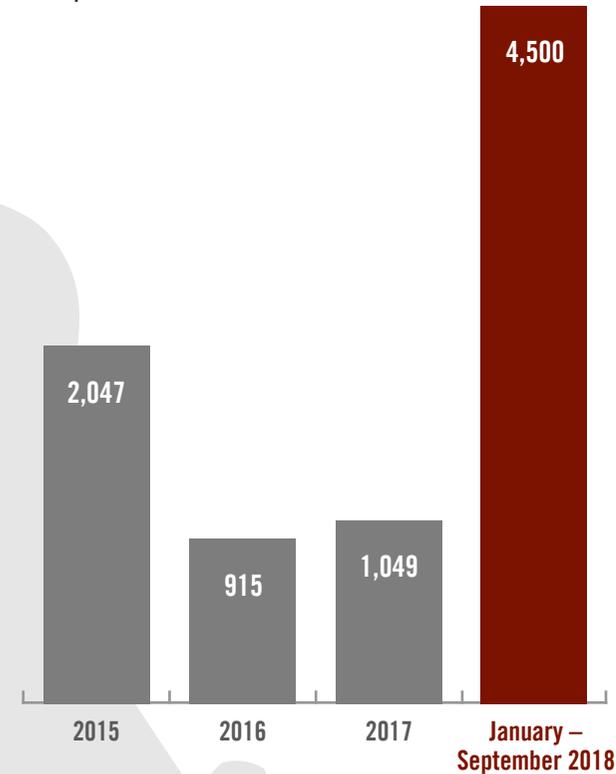
## NEW MIGRATION CORRIDOR

The migration route through Albania was still one of the most travelled routes through the Western Balkans region. According to UNHCR, 1,612 newly arrived refugees and migrants were identified in Albania during the third quarter of 2018. Compared to the previous three months, inflow of refugee and migrants remained at about the same level.

**1,612** newly arrived refugees and migrants were identified in Albania during the third quarter of 2018

The proportion of asylum requests among new arrivals was above 80% matching the second quarter of the year. Most applications for international protection were made by Syrians (50%), Pakistanis (17%), Iraqis (9%), refugees and migrants from North Africa (9%) and Palestinians (6%).

Number of newly arrived refugees and migrants in Albania for period 2015-2018



Number of newly arrived refugees and migrants in Albania for the first nine months of 2018, exceeded total number of arrivals in period 2015 – 2017.

## DEMOGRAPHY

According to UNHCR, out of 4,500 newly arrived refugees and migrants identified in Albania during the first nine months of the year, 89% were adults, while children made only 11% of the population. Segregating this data by sex, 90% of identified new arrivals were adult men and boys, while 10% were girls and women.

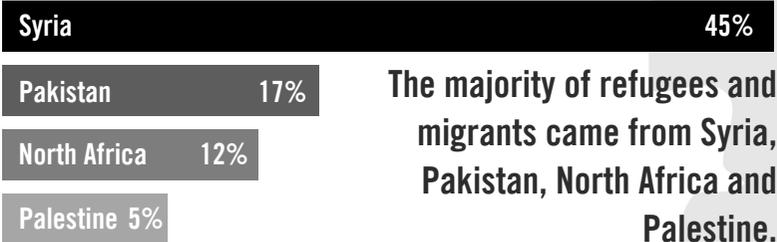
**90%** of identified new arrivals were adult men and boys

# Balkans Migration and Displacement Hub

## Data and Trends Analysis

The majority of newly arrived refugees and migrants came from Syria (45%), Pakistan (17%), North African countries (12%), Iraq (9%) and Palestine (5%).

Refugees and migrants by country of origin (N=4,500)



### MIGRATION ROUTES

The migration route through Albania is not a new route, but it started to be used only recently by so many refugees and migrants. According to the UNHCR data, vast majority of refugees and migrants enter the country from the south by crossing the border with Greece. Even though more than 80% of the identified new arrivals applied for international protection in Albania, many absconded after some days and tried to continue the journey. They moved north towards Montenegro, most frequently crossing the border in the vicinity of Lake Skadar.

Similar to the other Western Balkans countries, Albania is perceived as a transit country. It is part of the migration corridor which goes from Greece, through Albania, Montenegro, reaching Bosnia and Herzegovina from where refugees and migrants try to cross the border with Croatia and continue their journey towards western European countries.



ALBANIA

# KOSOVO\*

### TRANSIT

Even though Kosovo\* was never a major part of the Balkans migration corridor, small numbers of refugees and migrants travelled this route since the beginning of the refugee crisis. According to the UNHCR data, 298 persons applied for asylum in Kosovo\* since the beginning of 2018. This is an increase compared to 2017, when the total of 147 asylum applications were submitted for the whole year.

The data for 2018 also shows that most of asylum applications (190 or 64%) were submitted from July to September.

The same trend was noted by Save the Children and its partners in Serbia. Namely, we identified 128 refugees and migrants that came through Kosovo\* in 2018, out of which 101 (79%) arrived during the third quarter of 2018.

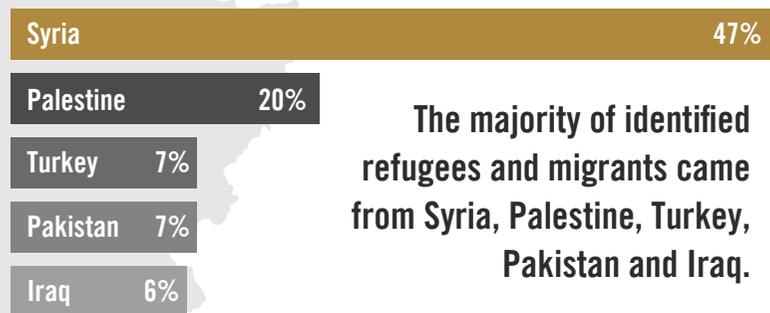
**298** persons applied for asylum in Kosovo\* since the beginning of 2018

### DEMOGRAPHY

The Ministry of Internal Affairs reported that most of the refugees and migrants that applied for international protection in Kosovo\* during the third quarter of the year were male (96%), while females made only 4% of all applicants. The same data set shows that applications were predominantly submitted by adults (95%) and only few children (5%).

Most of the refugee and migrants registered in Kosovo\* in last three months came from Syria (47%), Palestine (20%), Turkey (7%), Pakistan (7%) and Iraq (6%).

#### Refugees and migrants by country of origin (N=193)



The majority of identified refugees and migrants came from Syria, Palestine, Turkey, Pakistan and Iraq.

### MIGRATION ROUTES

As in other Balkans countries, many refugees and migrants only transit through Kosovo\* on their journey towards western and northern Europe. There is no official data on migration routes through Kosovo\* or entry and exit points. However, according to the field data, refugees and migrants enter Kosovo\* from the east, namely FYROM and move towards Serbia or Montenegro.

### REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS ON THE MOVE

There has been a noticeable increase of 70% in the number of newly arrived refugees and migrants supported by Save the Children and its partners in Serbia in the third quarter of 2018 when compared to the second quarter.

The number of new beneficiaries transiting Serbia has been growing since the beginning of the year and has reached 4,949 during the third quarter. Other agencies also noticed increased numbers of refugees and migrants with UNHCR reporting 6,591<sup>10</sup> observed new cases, which is more than double compared to the second quarter of the year.<sup>11</sup> Although the arrivals doubled, intentions to seek asylum in Serbia have increased by only 28% compared to the April-June period with 2,505 migrants and refugees expressing intent to apply for asylum, according to officials.<sup>12</sup> Only 102 formal applications for asylum were made during the same period showing once again that Serbia is perceived as a transit country by many migrants and refugees. According to UNHCR, the overall number of refugees and migrants present in Serbia increased by 900 when compared to June 2018 with 3900 refugees and migrants temporarily residing in the country.<sup>13</sup>

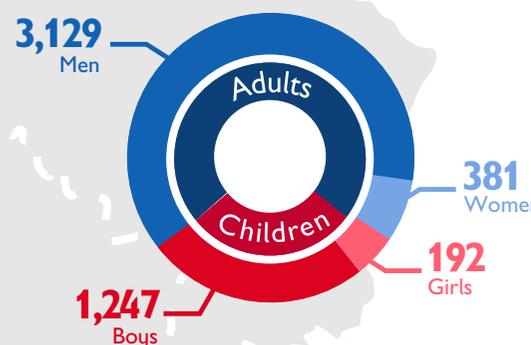
**4,949**  
newly arrived  
refugees and  
migrants in Serbia  
since the beginning  
of 2018

Refugees and migrants were using irregular channels to leave Serbia. Available data shows that only around 160 legally crossed the border while roughly more than 5,500 left Serbia using irregular channels.<sup>14</sup>

### DEMOGRAPHY

It should be noted that precise information on the number of refugees and migrants in Serbia is not available and that the nature of migration trends makes it difficult to collect exact data on this population. However, for several years already Save the Children has been systematically and regularly collecting data on its beneficiaries providing important insight into the structure and habits of this population.

Between July and September, Save the Children and its partners registered 4,949 new arrivals of which 3,510 (71%) were adults – 3,129 men and 381 women. Children made up 29% of newly arrived migrants and refugees (1,439) with a roughly similar sex ratio as in the adult population – 1,247 boys and 192 girls.



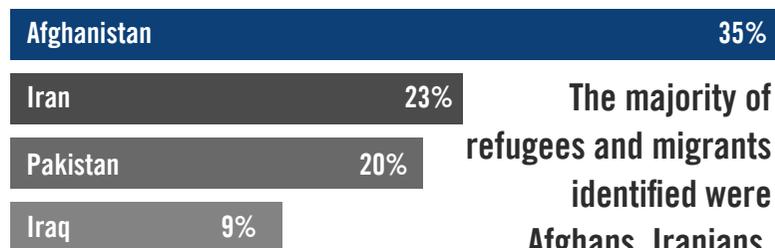
**90%**  
of newly identified  
refugees and  
migrants in  
Serbia were adult  
men and boys

The number of children has been continuously rising during past three months with a noticeable increase during the month of August. On average, UASC made as much as 77% of child migrant population identified by SCI and partners during the third quarter of 2018, which is significantly more than 52% of child migrants travelling alone who were identified between April and June.

**77%** of identified children were registered as traveling alone

Increased number of UASC influenced the overall composition of the newly arrived refugee and migrant population in Serbia. Afghan refugees and migrants were the largest group during this period making more than a third of all refugees and migrants (35%) which was a noticeable rise compared to the previous quarter. Iranians made up 23%, Pakistanis 20% and Iraqis 9% of new arrivals.

### Refugees and migrants by country of origin (N=4,949)



The majority of refugees and migrants identified were Afghans, Iranians, Pakistanis and Iraqis

Our data shows that, like in previous periods, the proportion of women and girls is much higher within refugee and migrant groups from Iraq (37%), Syria (32%), and Iran (27%). The number of newly arriving Syrian women and girls decreased the most compared to the previous quarter of the year.

## MIGRATION ROUTES

Exit routes from Serbia, similarly to previous months of 2018, were going through Croatia, Hungary and Romania, as well as Bosnia and Herzegovina which became more and more prominent since the end of 2017. Almost all borders surrounding Serbia were well protected with physical barriers and strong police presence, except the one between Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, making it the most likely site for migrants and refugees to try to leave Serbia irregularly.



**From Serbia, most of the refugees and migrants are heading west towards Bosnia and Herzegovina**

The most widely used route for entering Serbia in the third quarter of 2018 was the FYROM route (46%) while arrivals from Bulgaria also somewhat increased to 26% of all new arrivals.

Plane arrivals made up 23% of all refugee and migrant arrivals in Serbia during the third quarter of 2018, mostly by Iranian migrants and refugees.

## TRANSITING THROUGH ROMANIA

From early 2017, Romania became an important transit point of the Balkans migration route. This trend continued in 2018. According to the UNHCR field data, 635 persons applied for international protection during the third quarter of 2018, suggesting that the intensity of migration increased compared to the first six months of the year. Namely, during the first half of the year, on average 150 refugees and migrants per month applied for international protection in Romania, while during the third quarter there were about 210 monthly applications.

**635**  
persons applied for international protection during the first six months of 2018

At the end of September, there were 497 migrants and asylum seekers accommodated in state-run reception centres in Romania.<sup>15</sup> This is a 35% increase compared to the 372 persons reported in Romania at the end of the second quarter.<sup>16</sup>

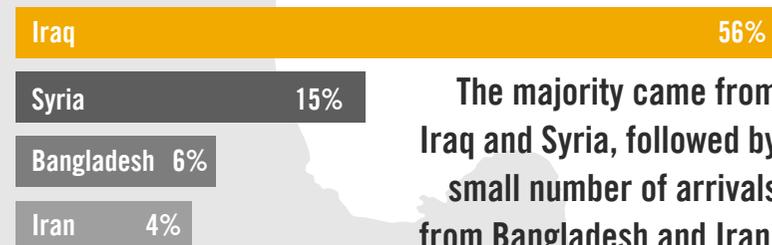
According to the field data, the length of stay in Romania varies. Families choose to stay longer than single adults who, in some cases, leave the country after several weeks. The average length of stay on the Romanian territory for asylum seekers is about 1-3 months and for the beneficiaries of international protection, the lengths of stay varies from 1 to 4 years.

## DEMOGRAPHY

During the last quarter of 2018, Romanian officials registered 635 asylum applications. According to the field data, about 20% of applicants were children, while 80% of registered asylum seekers were adults.

The majority of applicants came from Iraq (56%) and Syria (15%), followed by a small number of arrivals from Bangladesh (6%), Iran (4%) and other countries.

### Applicants for international protection by country of origin (N=635)



The majority came from Iraq and Syria, followed by small number of arrivals from Bangladesh and Iran.

Due to the fact that official data on newly arrived refugee and migrant children was not available, figures available to Save the Children Romania office are used to illustrate trends. According to this data, 110 newly arrived refugee and migrant children were identified during the third quarter of 2018, out of which 71 (65%) boys and 39 (35%) girls. Most of them came from Iraq (51%), Syria (21%), Iran (7%) and Afghanistan (7%).

Almost half of newly identified children (53 children or 48%) travelled alone, arriving from Iraq (70%), Bangladesh (17%) and Afghanistan (8%). Unlike in other countries along the Balkans route, many unaccompanied girls were identified. Namely, 25% of newly arrived unaccompanied minors were girls, almost all of them from Iraq.

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### MIGRATION ROUTES

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According to the data from the field, refugees and migrants mostly arrived in Romania from Serbia, while a small number entered from Bulgaria.

As in the other Balkans countries, refugees and migrants see Romania as a transit point on their journey towards Western Europe. According to the recent field data, the length of their stay in Romania varies. Single adults usually have shorter stays and leave the country in several weeks while families stay longer.

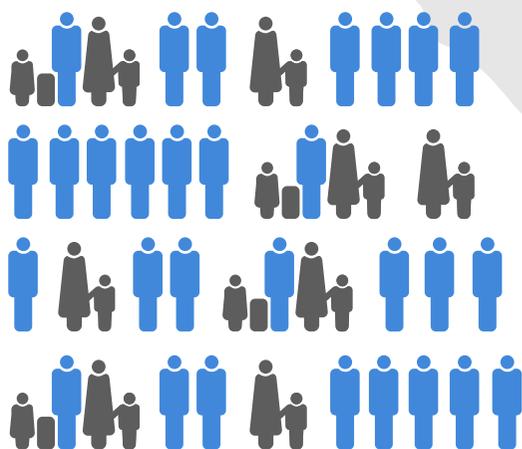
The main exit point from the country is its north-west border with Hungary.



# BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

## BUSY ROUTE THROUGH BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

The migration route through Bosnia and Herzegovina emerged in late 2017 and quickly became one of the main transit corridors in the region. According to the UNCT, 8,492 newly arrived refugees and migrants have been identified during the third quarter of 2018, which is 30% more than during the previous three months.<sup>17</sup>



**8,492**  
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Similar trend was identified in the number of intentions to seek asylum submitted by refugees and migrants in Bosnia and Herzegovina. For July – September 2018, the Service for Foreigners' Affairs issued 8,089 attestations of intention to seek asylum, compared to 5,753 issued during the second quarter of

the year. However, the increased number of new arrivals and intentions to seek asylum did not increase the number of asylum applications. In total, 424 people have submitted their asylum claim from July to September 2018, while 431 refugees and migrants did it during previous three months.

According to the data from the field, it is estimated that about 75% of refugees and migrants who have arrived to Bosnia and Herzegovina since the beginning of the year have already left the country. Those who

are still in the country, about 4,000 of them, are mostly accommodated in informal settlements in Una-Sana Canton in the north-west part of the country. Unlike other countries in the region where reception and asylum centres are below capacity, Bosnia and Herzegovina lacks capacities to accommodate a large number of refugees and migrants. As of end of September there were about 770 places in winterized accommodation facilities, while there is a need for more than 4,000 beds. The biggest gap and the most urgent need for accommodation is in the Una-Sana Canton. At this moment, there are only about 400 places available in that area. Two additional sites have been identified to potentially accommodate about 2,000 people.<sup>18</sup> However, if the number of refugees and migrants in the country, especially in the Una-Sana Canton remains high in the following months it is going to be a great challenge to find an adequate accommodation for all the people in need during the winter.

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# Balkans Migration and Displacement Hub

## Data and Trends Analysis

# BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

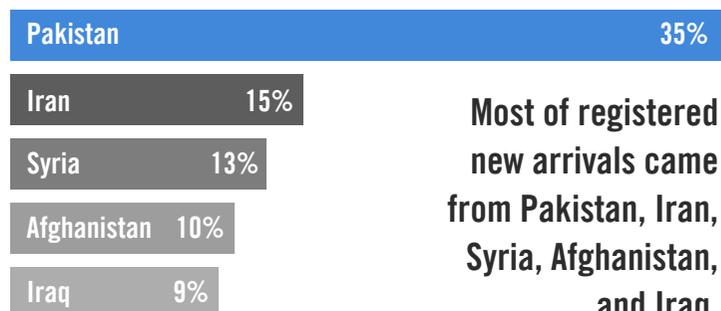
It is important to mention that all of existing and planned accommodation facilities are for general refugee and migrant population, while appropriate care of unaccompanied and separated children remain as a challenge that need to be addressed in following period.

## DEMOGRAPHY

At the moment, the disaggregated data on refugees and migrants in Bosnia and Herzegovina are not available. The only available information is on refugees and migrants' country of origin.

According to that data, most of refugees and migrants in Bosnia and Herzegovina came from Pakistan (35%), Iran (15%), Syria (13%), Afghanistan (10%) and Iraq (9%).

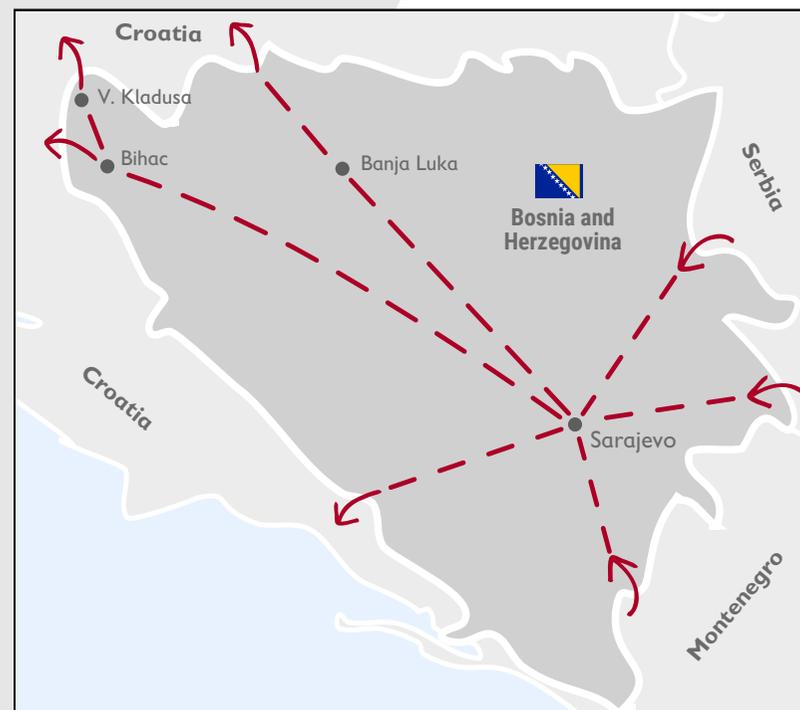
### Refugees and migrants by country of origin (N=7,752)



**Most of registered new arrivals came from Pakistan, Iran, Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq.**

## MIGRATION ROUTES

Most of refugees and migrants identified in Bosnia and Herzegovina entered into the country from south or south-east by irregularly crossing the border with Serbia or Montenegro. Entry routes merge in Sarajevo, the country's capital located in the central part of the country or in Tuzla on the north. From there, refugees and migrants head towards Croatia.



The border between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia is more than 900 kilometres long. According to the data from the field, the hardest pressure is on the north-west part of the border in the area of Bihac and Velika Kladusa. It is estimated that there are about 4,000 refugees and migrants in that area, most of them in informal settlements waiting to cross the border and continue their journey. Besides these two towns, refugees and migrants were identified in the north (Banja Luka area), and in the south.

# Balkans Migration and Displacement Hub

## Data and Trends Analysis

# ABOUT THE PROJECT

The official closure of borders, and the EU-Turkey deal in March 2016, reduced the number of migrants, but did not stop the migrations through the Balkans. Refugees and migrants have been pushed into the hands of smugglers and traffickers facing heightened protection risks. The national protection systems in countries like Greece, Bosnia and Herzegovina, FYROM, and Serbia are struggling to provide adequate support to new arrivals. There is a lack of reliable data on migration trends and there are many rights violations against migrants and refugees transiting through, or stranded in the Balkans.

Organizations and volunteer groups operating in the Balkans track irregular arrivals, departures, cases of pushbacks, detention, and violence in their own countries, often without clearly defined standards, objectives or consistency. At the current time, there is no unified collection of information or a regional initiative to collate and organize the available information into a clear and concise overview.

International attention remains mostly focused on Greece, while the migration flows through other Balkans countries stay below the radar. The lack of comprehensive data analytics at individual country and regional level increases the vulnerability of refugees and migrants on the move, children in particular, and hinders the development of relevant, evidence-based and responsive policies and programs.

Data and Trend Analysis (DATA) is a project launched by Save the Children's Balkan Migration and Displacement Hub (BMDH). The goal of this initiative is to synthesize valuable information on migration, especially on refugee and migrant children, and contribute to evidence-based programming and policy-making within the region.

The DATA Project will focus on the following three topics: (1) Main migratory trends: ebbs and flows in migration, changes in demographics, changes in routes, and seasonal changes; (2) Main protection violations: detention rates and conditions, pushbacks, returns, police violence, local acceptance and tensions; (3) Changes in national migration and social protection policies.

### Data Sources

Besides primary data collected by Save the Children and its partners, publicly available data from reports, dashboards, publications, policies and articles, and information from other relevant stakeholders will be collected and analyzed. The initiative will remain open and will encourage the exchange of information, cooperation and partnership with all relevant actors. Data processing will be done in line with national and international regulations and standards on protection of personal data.

### Geographical Scope

We will cover the Balkans route which includes the territories of Greece, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia, Albania, Kosovo, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Hungary.

<sup>1</sup> This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence

<sup>2</sup> Source: UNHCR, Fact Sheet Greece [September 2018](#) and [June 2018](#)

<sup>3</sup> Source: Hellenic Republic Ministry of Interior National Coordination Centre for Border Control, Immigration and Asylum, [National situational picture regarding the islands at eastern Aegean sea \(10/09/2018\)](#)

<sup>4</sup> Source: Situation Update: [Unaccompanied Children \(UAC\) in Greece \(30 September 2018\)](#)

<sup>5</sup> Source: UNHCR, [Greece Sea Arrivals Dashboard September 2018](#)

<sup>6</sup> Source: UNHCR, Dead and Missing at the Sea [September 2018](#) and [June 2018](#)

<sup>7</sup> Source: Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Bulgaria, Monthly Information on Migration Situation in the Republic of Bulgaria for [July 2018](#), [August 2018](#) and [September 2018](#).

<sup>8</sup> “Asylum seekers are allowed to reside outside the reception centres at so called “external addresses”. This could be done if asylum seekers submit a formal waiver from their right to accommodation and social assistance, as warranted by law, and declare to cover rent and other related costs at their own expenses. Except those few whose financial condition allows residence outside the reception centres, the other group of people who live at external addresses are usually Dublin returnees, to whom the SAR applies the exclusion from social benefits, including accommodation as a measure of sanction within the jurisdiction for such decision as provided by the law (Law and Asylum and Refugees – article 29)”. Source: [Country Report: Bulgaria](#), p 48, Bulgarian Helsinki Committee

<sup>9</sup> Source: IOM, Mixed Migration Flows in the Mediterranean: Compilation of Available Data and Information for [September 2018](#).

<sup>10</sup> [Source: UNHCR Inter-agency operational update \(July-September 2018\)](#)

<sup>11</sup> [Source: UNHCR Inter-agency operational update \(April-June 2018\)](#)

<sup>12</sup> Right to Asylum in the Republic of Serbia for July – September 2018, Belgrade Centre for Human Rights, October 2018. Available at: <http://azil.rs/pravo-na-azil-u-republici-srbiji-izvestaj-za-jul-septembar-2018/>

<sup>13</sup> [Source: UNHCR Inter-agency operational update \(July-September 2018\)](#)

<sup>14</sup> [Source: UNHCR Inter-agency operational update \(July-September 2018\)](#)

<sup>15</sup> Source: IOM, Mixed Migration Flows in the Mediterranean: Compilation of Available Data and Information for [September 2018](#)

<sup>16</sup> Source: IOM, Mixed Migration Flows in the Mediterranean: Compilation of Available Data and Information for [June 2018](#)

<sup>17</sup> Source: UNCT Operational Update for [September 2018](#)

<sup>18</sup> Ibid



**Balkans Migration and Displacement Hub  
Data and Trends Analysis**