



## UNICEF Bosnia and Herzegovina

### Situation Report

21 May 2021



## HIGHLIGHTS

- An estimated 6,000 migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers, including approximately 750 children in Bosnia and Herzegovina are in need of immediate humanitarian assistance.
- About 4,100 migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers including about 600 children (UAC and children with families) are in temporary reception centres (TRCs) and other formal accommodation across the country.
- An estimated 1,900 migrants, refugees, and asylum-seekers, including approximately 150 unaccompanied children (UAC) are outside TRCs and mostly have been identified sleeping rough in poor sanitary and hygiene conditions, exposing them to severe health risks in Una-Sana, Sarajevo and Tuzla Cantons.
- The lack of sufficient accommodation capacities and access to support services for unaccompanied children highlights the need for a small-scale facility and appropriate alternative care options for particularly the most vulnerable UAC.

## SITUATION IN NUMBERS

### IN NEED

**6,000** people including **750** children in urgent need of humanitarian assistance

### TO BE REACHED

**2,000** people including **1,600** children

### URGENT FUNDING REQUIREMENTS

**US\$ 1,700,000**

\*\*\*\*\*

### PLANNED TARGETS BY 31 DECEMBER 2021

- **1,600** children reached with quality child protection support (guardianship appointment, case management, legal information, mental health and psychosocial support)
- **1,000** unaccompanied children benefitting from appropriate care arrangements and/or services
- **1,500** children and youth receiving basic food and non-food items, including winter clothes and blankets

## SITUATION OVERVIEW & HUMANITARIAN NEEDS

According to an official decision, the admission of unaccompanied children (UAC) in temporary reception centre (TRC) Miral is limited to 20 UAC, while TRC Borici has had an imposed ban on the admission of UAC for several months. Last week, the Ministry of Security has announced the closure of TRC Sedra and relocation of the families and unaccompanied children in a few weeks' time. The available capacity for unaccompanied children in Una-Sana Canton (USC) is up to 80, which does not meet the actual needs. Due to the current situation, **many UAC are denied access to support services, assigned guardianship and protection.** There is an urgent need to ensure access to such services for all UAC in USC, especially for the most vulnerable children as a matter of priority.

The lack of sufficient accommodation capacities for unaccompanied children also highlights the **need for a small-scale facility for particularly vulnerable UAC.** As accommodation capacity is currently available for UAC only in reception centres where single men or families are accommodated, an alternative option is required that will respond to the need of specific categories of **UAC, such as those under 15 years of age, at risk of/victims of abuse and exploitation, unaccompanied girls, separated younger children** and those requiring targeted mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS).

On a monthly basis, in USC, the average number of UAC staying outside TRCs ranges from 35 to 50, including up to 10 identified UAC aged 10 to 14 years. **A significant number of UAC have been diagnosed with a neuropsychiatric disorder,** including recorded cases of eight children who attempted suicide between March 2020 and February 2021. There is an obvious gap in the healthcare system in TRCs for UAC who require targeted mental health services and professional support. There is still a challenge to ensure optimal **protection for young children in TRCs who are temporarily separated from their parents** (hospital treatment, separation during movement, etc.). In relation to the above, all UAC should have access to services and accommodation that is in accordance with international standards which do not expose children to protection risks, as in the case of accommodation in the same TRC with single men or families.

**Due to recent favorable spring weather conditions and recent announcement of closure of TRC, the trend of leaving TRCs is ongoing,** not only among UAC but families as well. Furthermore, continuity in provision of individual psychological counselling for UAC and children in families is impacted by increasing onward movements and having to respect the preventive isolation for 7-14 days after returning to TRCs. This trend affects the cycle of medical examinations and immunization as well. In order to mitigate the practice of incomplete medical treatments, the UNICEF pediatric team organised additional individual workshops with parents to ensure they understand the implications and exposure of children with health

## HUMANITARIAN STRATEGY

On behalf of the UNCT, UNHCR and IOM are co-leading and coordinating the UN humanitarian response and convening regular coordination meetings in Una-Sana Canton and Sarajevo Canton. UNICEF is leading the response related to unaccompanied children and children with families. The UN and its partners have undertaken significant efforts over the past years to support the BiH authorities expand the capacity to provide accommodation, humanitarian assistance, protection and access to basic services (including health, education and social assistance) to migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in the country. The BiH Ministry of Security has developed a migration management action plan which is currently pending approval by the BiH Council of Ministers.

## UNICEF RESPONSE

UNICEF achieved following results in last one month

- 72 guardianships assigned to unaccompanied children by Centers for Social Welfare
- 744 children on the move (105 girls and 639 boys, including 494 UAC) benefited from on-site 24/7 protection support in designated zones as well as non-formal and recreational activities
- 300 children accommodated in TRCs benefited from Child Friendly Space activities
- 358 children benefited from pediatric health care services
- 118 children were vaccinated, and 16 children provided dental care.
- 145 children continued online school.

UNICEF with partners continue to support non-formal education activities and **44 workshops** were held in TRCs related to date , IT (basic use of Word and Paint) and Bosnian language, as well as drawing, art and creative work and sports and also continued organizing workshops for parents, including marking the **International Day of Families** and for 12 child-protection front-line workers online training on the topic "Non-Suicidal Self Injury and suicidal behaviour".

UNICEF along with partners is working intensively to raise awareness about the prevention of COVID-19 infection among children and parents. **22 workshops for parents** were organized where **430 parents were informed on the importance of immunization, pediatric** as well as **control examinations**. Also, pediatric team examined children aged 0-24 months explaining to parents the importance of **proper neuromotor development** and the symptoms of abnormal development and they were shown the basic exercises of developmental gymnastics.

**UNICEF will continue to advocate for small-scale facilities for the most vulnerable unaccompanied children.**

#### **FUNDING**

UNICEF BiH would need an additional US\$ 1.7 million for the period June to December 2021 to address the **critical needs** of children on the move, unaccompanied children sleeping outside, and unaccompanied children currently accommodated in TRCs together with large groups of single men. This funding will ensure continuity of critical child protection services, including outreach activities to identify UAC, provision of basic food (water and high-nutrient biscuits) and non-food items (clothes, shoes and blankets) as well as psychological first aid, referral to and provision of appropriate care arrangements, including designated zones for UAC in TRCs which ensure 24/7 protection and care. The funding is critical to ensure minimum standards for protection and care for unaccompanied children in all reception centres, including mental health and psychosocial support.

**The next situation update will be published in June 2021.**

#### **WHO TO CONTACT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:**

- Rownak Khan, Representative, UNICEF BiH: [rkhan@unicef.org](mailto:rkhan@unicef.org)
- Alwin Nijholt, Deputy Representative, UNICEF BiH: [anijholt@unicef.org](mailto:anijholt@unicef.org)
- Ahmed Novo, Emergency Coordinator, UNICEF BiH: [anovo@unicef.org](mailto:anovo@unicef.org)