

FLOW MONITORING SURVEYS' IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

1 JUNE – 7 OCTOBER 2022



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Cover photo: IOM staff conducting flow monitoring survey in of the temporary reception centers in Bosnia and Herzegovina © IOM 2022

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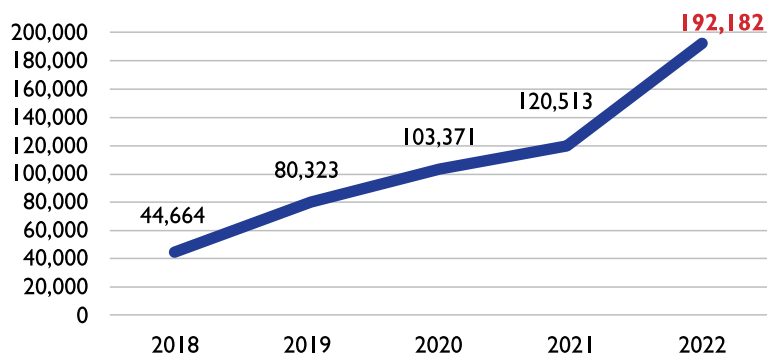
1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the results of the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) Flow Monitoring Surveys (FMS) in the Western Balkans (WB) region. FMS are a type of quantitative survey, which provide a snapshot of the profiles, experiences and needs of migrants residing in reception centres in the countries or territories of the WB. The IOM interviewed a total of 1,069 adult migrants¹ in reception centres from 1 June to 7 October 2022 in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Kosovo*.²

Increased arrivals and high mobility

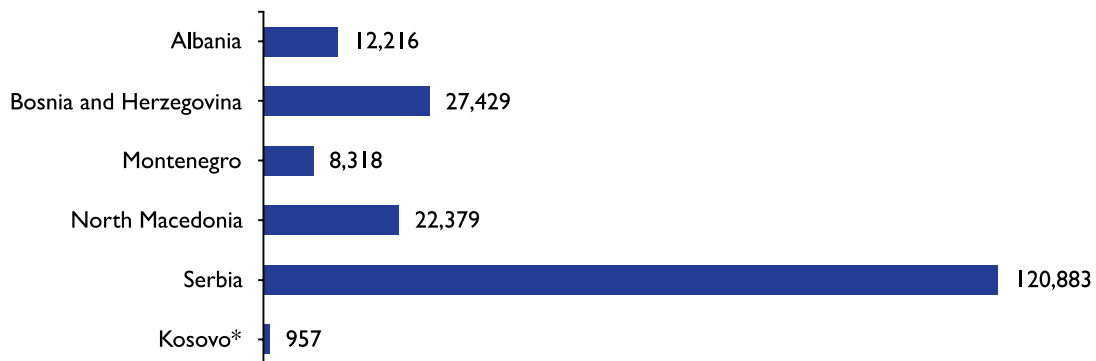
2022 was a shifting year for migration in the WB. More migrants arrived in the region, but transited rapidly through, spending fewer and fewer days in each country or territory before attempting to cross the external borders of the European Union (EU). In 2022, authorities and institutions registered 192,182 migrants in the WB - a 59.5 per cent increase in arrivals compared to 2021 and a 330 per cent increase when compared to 2018.³ These numbers refer to registrations of migrants by authorities in the WB, meaning that double counting is possible as one migrant can be registered in multiple territories.

Figure 1: Annual arrivals of migrants in the countries and territories of the Western Balkans, 2018 – 2022



For example, in BiH, migrants spent on average 58 days in transit reception centres in December 2021 compared to 8 days in December 2022.⁴ This shift is also reflected in the patterns of those migrants who reside outside transit reception centres. Over the past years, migrants used to camp in national parks or squat in abandoned buildings for days, weeks and sometimes even months in their attempts to cross borders. This was no longer the case in 2022, as people were moving rapidly through the region, often in a few days. Serbia remained the main hub with close to 60 per cent of all registrations in 2022.

Figure 2: Arrivals in the countries or territories of the Western Balkans in 2022.



¹ Interviewees include migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers as the reference population consists of mixed migration flows. These terms are used interchangeably throughout the report.

² References to Kosovo shall be understood in the context of UN Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999).

³ Data from IOM Flow Monitoring Portal – Europe Arrivals.

⁴ Data from Smart Camp, IOM's camp management and camp coordination software.

Migration routes

Most migrants travel through the Republic of Türkiye before crossing into Greece (by land or sea) or Bulgaria. People from the Central and South Asia (Afghans, Bangladeshis, Iranians, Pakistanis) and the Middle East (Iraqis, Syrians) tend to conduct most of their journeys via the land route, often walking great distances in the process. The sole exception to this applied to nationals from India who had a greater ability to travel via air due to visa free regimes in 2022.⁵

In contrast, most people from the African continent start their journeys by plane either directly to the WB or through a transit country to the Republic of Türkiye. Until October 2022, nationals of Burundi were also able to travel visa free to Serbia. The cancellation of this policy has led to a significant reduction in the numbers of Burundian nationals in the region since then. Likewise, Cuban nationals can also travel directly to the region visa free, via direct flights to Belgrade or through Moscow.

Figure 3: Map of the main routes within the Western Balkans⁶



Once in the WB, the most active routes are through North Macedonia, Serbia and then directly attempting to cross into the EU through the Hungarian border. Alternatively, once in Serbia, many others cross the border into eastern BiH and then attempt the crossing into Croatia from the north and north-western part of BiH.

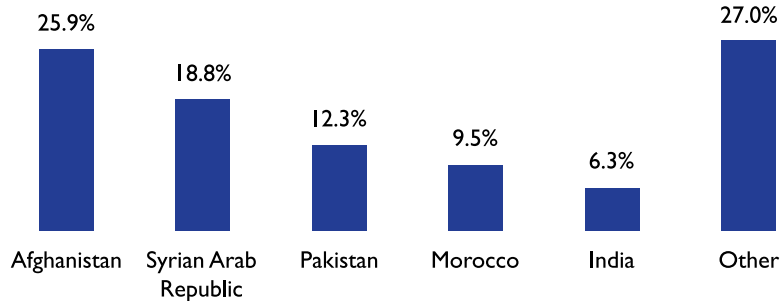
⁵ Indian nationals could travel visa free to Serbia until February 2023.

⁶ This map is for illustrative purpose only. Names and boundaries do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations and participating organizations.

Profiles and intentions

The top five declared nationalities of migrants and refugees interviewed by DTM in 2022 were Afghans (25.9%), Syrians (18.8%), Pakistanis (12.3%), Moroccans (9.5%) and Indians (6.3%).

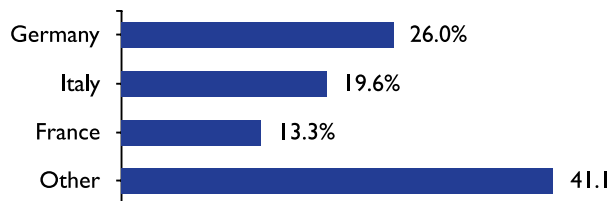
Figure 4: Main nationalities of respondents



[Afghan nationals arrived in large numbers in 2021](#) as a result of the Taliban takeover in August 2021, but this has decreased proportionally in 2022. Trends from 2022 also indicate that [more Syrians are leaving](#) the Syrian Arab Republic as well as from their previous displacement location in Republic of Türkiye.

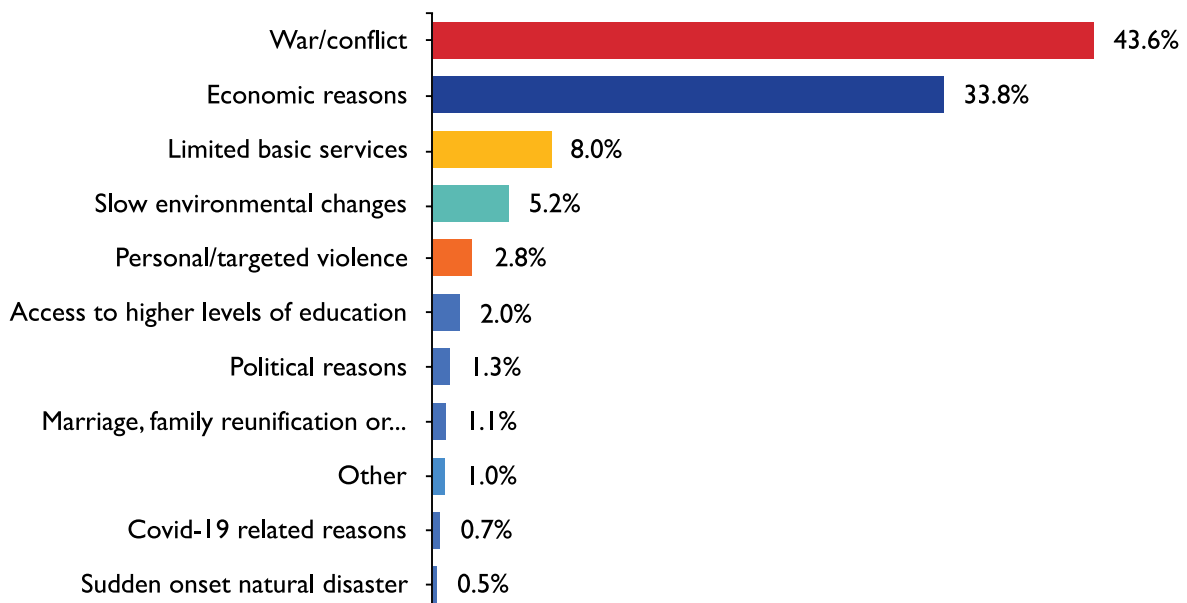
When asked about their intended countries of destination, most migrants stated Germany, Italy or France, with differences among nationalities. Most Pakistanis stated Italy as their country of intended destination, whereas Afghans largely want to travel to Germany and to a lesser extent Italy and France. Nationals of the Syrian Arab Republic indicated they wished to travel to Germany.

Figure 5: Intended destination countries



The most frequently cited drivers of migration are war and conflict as well as economic reasons.

Figure 6: Main cited migration drivers



Needs and vulnerabilities

Migrants in the WB have faced varying experiences and have diverse needs. Almost one-fifth (19.8%) of migrants reported that they had experienced at least one form of violence, exploitation or abuse along the route among those covered in the survey. In addition, 16.6% have been robbed during their journeys and 11.5 per cent have reported to have experienced health issues. Many of the most frequently cited needs during the migration journeys relate to people having travelled for prolonged periods of time without basic amenities. The most frequently cited needs during the journeys⁷ were shelter, which was reported by 30 per cent of respondents, cash assistance (19.7%), food (17.4%), medical assistance (10.8%), as well as clothes (9.9%).

2. INTRODUCTION

IOM's [Displacement Tracking Matrix \(DTM\)](#) is a data collection and analysis system that tracks and monitors multi-layered information on displacement and population mobility. DTM analyses the profiles, intentions, vulnerabilities, and needs of displaced and mobile populations to enable decision makers and responders to provide context-specific assistance.

DTM is present in all of the WB and the Republic of Türkiye, and is therefore in a unique position to provide route-based data analysis of mixed migration movements along the Eastern Mediterranean Route. Every year, DTM teams interview thousands of migrants across the entire region to gauge their profiles and needs, as well as their intentions. DTM works closely with migration agencies in the WB to build capacity and to improve evidence-based decision making and programming.

Since 2015, the WB region has emerged as a major crossroads for migrants and refugees⁸ attempting to reach western Europe. A record number of migrants entered WB countries or territories in 2022, the highest number since 2015, with 192,182 arrivals registered in the year. It is important to note that these numbers refer to registrations of migrants by authorities and institutions in the WB, meaning that double counting is possible as one migrant can be registered in multiple territories. To improve assistance to migrants and to contribute to evidence-based policy making, IOM launched FMS in Albania, BiH, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Kosovo*. FMS are a type of quantitative survey, which provide a snapshot of the profiles, experiences and needs of migrants.

This report contains the findings from a DTM FMS carried out between 1 June and 7 October 2022. FMS are part of the IOM's DTM activities in the Mediterranean and WB region. These started in October 2015 are conducted within the framework of the IOM's research on populations on the move through the Mediterranean, WB and Western African Atlantic routes to Europe. The analysis provides information on profiles, transit routes and vulnerabilities of respondents.

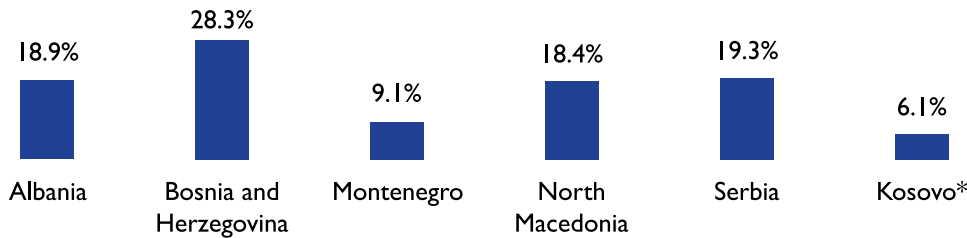
FMS gather information about migrants' profiles, including age, sex, gender, countries and areas of origin, levels of education and employment status before migration, key transit points on their route, cost of the journey, reasons for moving and intentions. It also has a module on migrants' vulnerability to and potential past experience of abuse, exploitation and violence. All analyses, together with the latest information on arrivals to Europe, can be accessed via DTM's portal on mixed migration [Flows to Europe](#).

⁷ These are needs reported during their journeys and not while accommodated at reception centres in the region where they have access to a range of services including shelter, food, non-food items, as well as mental health and psychosocial support.

⁸ Mixed migration movements are those in which different categories of people are travelling together, generally in an irregular manner, using the same routes and means of transport, but for different reasons. People travelling as part of mixed movements have varying needs and profiles and may include asylum seekers, refugees, trafficked persons, unaccompanied/separated children, and migrants in an irregular situation.

IOM interviewed 1,069 adult migrants in reception centres in Albania (Korce, Shkoder, Tirana, Kakavija), BiH (Blažuj, Ušivak, Lipa and Borići), Montenegro (Spuž), North Macedonia (Gevgelija and Kumanovo), Serbia (Krnjača, Miksalište, Obrenovac, Preševo, and Principovac) and Kosovo* (Directorate for Migration and Foreigners, Magure, Vranidol, and Lipian).

Figure 7: Percentage of respondents per country or territory in the Western Balkans



Source: DTM FMS 2022, n=1,069

3. MIGRANTS TRAVELLING THROUGH THE WB: BASELINE PROFILE

3.1 Sample size and main nationalities

The information presented in this report is based on a sample of 1,069 respondents. The top five declared nationalities were Afghans (25.9%), Syrians (18.8%), Pakistanis (12.3%), Moroccans (9.5%) and Indians (6.3%). This was followed by nationals of Bangladesh (5.4%), the Islamic Republic of Iran (4.8%), Burundi (4.5%), Iraq (3.1%), Cuba (2%), Algeria (1.3%), and Somalia (1%).⁹

3.2 Demographic profile

Men represent most of the sample at 94 per cent, while women made up the remaining 6 per cent. The median age is 25 years with the youngest respondent being 18 years old and the oldest being 57 years of age. The low number of female respondents might be attributed to several factors, including cultural reasons and the presence of fewer female enumerators.

The majority of the respondents (73.9%) were single, with 23.5 per cent being married. Less than one-tenth (2.6%) said that they were divorced, separated or widowed. Just over one-fifth (21.3%) of the survey respondents had children. Of those who had children, 61.4 per cent reported their children had remained in their country of origin, while 32.9 per cent their children were with them. Less than one-tenth (3.5%) stated that their children were in the country of intended destination. Almost one-third (32.9%) had one child, while 15.8 per cent had two children, 19.7 per cent said they had three children and, similarly, 19.7 per cent of the respondents reported to have four children.

The three most commonly spoken languages were Arabic (31.7%), Farsi (17%), and Urdu (11.5%). These were followed by Pashtu (9.6%), Bengali and Punjabi each at 5.5 per cent, Dari (4.1%), French (3.4%), Kurdish (2.9%), Spanish (2.1%), Kirundi (1.6%) and Somali (1.1%). There were a further 22 languages constituting less than one per cent of the total sample size respectively. Over half (55.5%) of the respondents stated that English was their second language.

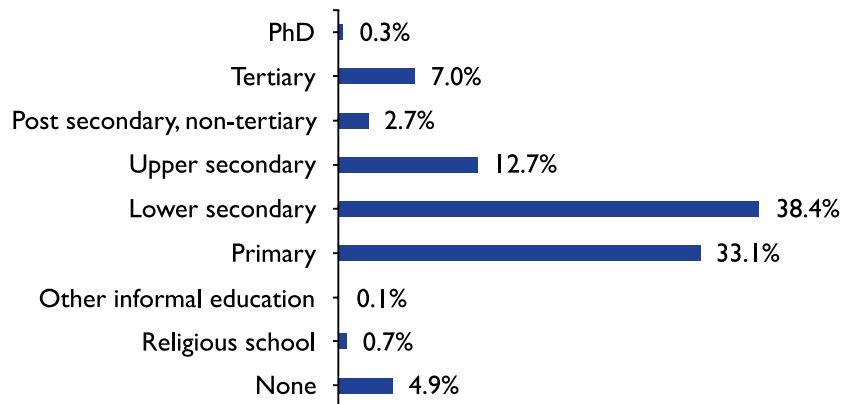
Of the total respondents, 5.6 per cent had been internally displaced in their countries of origin prior to move internationally. These respondents came from the Syrian Arab Republic, Afghanistan, Iraq, Burundi, and Somalia.

⁹ The remainder of the sample size consisted of nationals of Egypt, the Palestinian Territories, Ghana, Libya, Eritrea, Cameroon, Comoros, the Gambia, Jordan, Nigeria, the Russian Federation, Togo, Burkina Faso, the Republic of Congo, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ecuador, Guinea, Nepal, Niger, Sierra Leone, Sudan and Yemen each at less than one per cent.

3.3 Education and employment

The average number of years of education that the entire sample had completed was 10 years.

Figure 8: Breakdown of education level



Source: DTM FMS 2022, n=1,069

The most frequently cited subjects of study were education among those who had completed at least upper secondary school were business (13.2%), social sciences (11.1%), engineering, manufacturing or construction (7.9%), Information and Communications Technology (7.9%), services (7.4%), natural sciences (6.8%), health (5.3%) and agriculture (4.2%).

3.4 Employment status prior to departure

Over two-fifths (43.3%) were unemployed and looking for a job prior to departing, while 41.5 per cent of respondents declared they had been employed before leaving their country of origin, followed by 7.3 per cent who were students. The main professions of those who were employed were skilled manual labor (17.9%), services and sales workers (15.7%), craft and related works (10.7%), professionals (7.3%), clerical support workers (7%), technicians and associate professionals (7%), elementary occupations (6.8%), armed forces (5.3%) and managers (2.2%).

3.5 Reasons for leaving country of origin

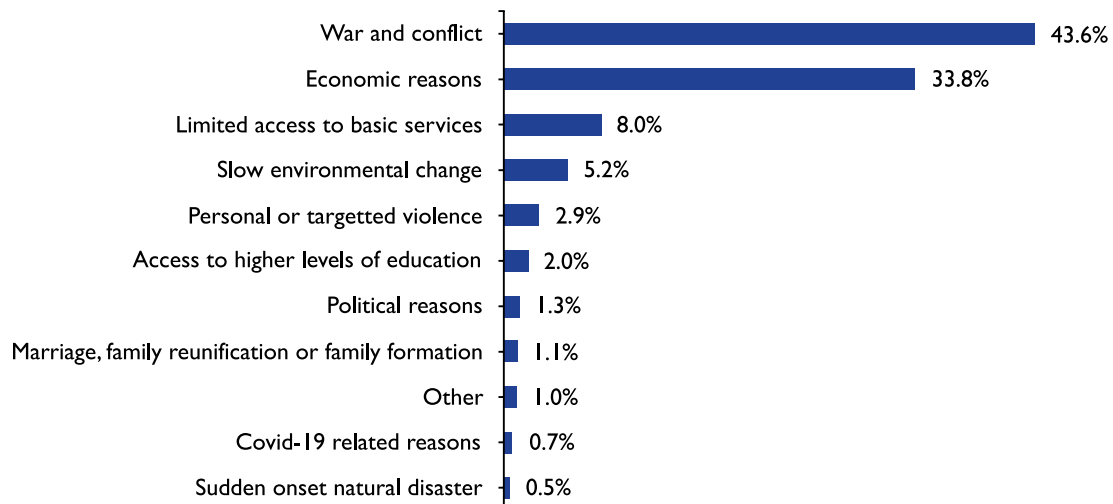
Interview respondents were asked to state the main reason for leaving their countries of origin, to get an understanding of some of the drivers of migration.¹⁰ Over two-fifths (43.6%) of the respondents stated that their main reason for leaving their country of origin was war and conflict followed by just over one-third (33.8%) who stated economic reasons. Less than one-tenth (8%) said it was due to limited access to basic services, followed by slow environmental change (5.3%), personal/targeted violence (2.9%), access to education (1.9%), political reasons (1.3%), marriage or family reunification (1.1%), other reasons (0.9%), covid-19-related reasons (0.7%), and sudden onset natural disaster (0.5%).

Among the women in the sample, 41.7 per cent stated that they had left their country of origin because of economic reasons while 33 per cent said it was for war and conflict. One-tenth stated limited access to basic services while 5 per cent stated personal/targeted violence, 3.3 per cent stated marriage or family reunification. This was followed by access to education (1.7%), Covid-19 (1.7%), political reasons (1.7%), and slow environmental change (1.7%).

¹⁰ The list of categories included in the questionnaire were: sudden onset natural disaster (e.g., flood, storm, landslide, earthquake); slow environmental change (e.g. livestock died due to drought, loss of agriculture due to drought/poor rainfall, sea level rise destroyed homes/assets, reduced fish stocks); war/conflict; personal/ targeted violence; limited access to services (basic education, health care, water, food, accommodation, transportation); economic reasons; education (higher levels) or training; marriage, family reunification or family formation; COVID-19 related reasons.

Migration drivers differ for the top five nationalities in the region (Afghans, Syrians, Pakistanis, Moroccans, and Indians). Almost three-fourths (74.7%) of Afghan nationals cite war and conflict as the main reason for leaving their country of origin while 14.8 per cent state economic reasons. Almost all Syrians (95%) said they had left the Syrian Arab Republic due to war and conflict. Nationals of Pakistan were a little more divided, with half having left for economic reasons while 18.2 per cent said war and conflict and 16.8 per cent said limited access to services. Most Moroccans (88.2%) left their country of origin for economic reasons, while 59.7 per cent of Indian nationals left because of slow environmental changes.

Figure 9: Main reason for leaving country of origin



Source: DTM FMS 2022, n=1,069

3.6 Reason for leaving country of departure

Over a quarter (27.5%) of the survey respondents had been living in a country other than their country of origin for more than a year, with the main countries of residence being the Republic of Türkiye and Greece. To understand this secondary movement, after having been resident for at least a year in another country, respondents were asked to indicate the reason for deciding to leave at this specific moment. The two main reasons provided were that their asylum claims were rejected (mentioned by 62.1% of the respondents) and because of economic reasons (mentioned by 18.2% of the respondents).

3.7 Mode of travel

Almost a quarter (24%) of the respondents said that someone had helped them in organizing their journeys, while 76 per cent said that nobody had helped them organize their journey.

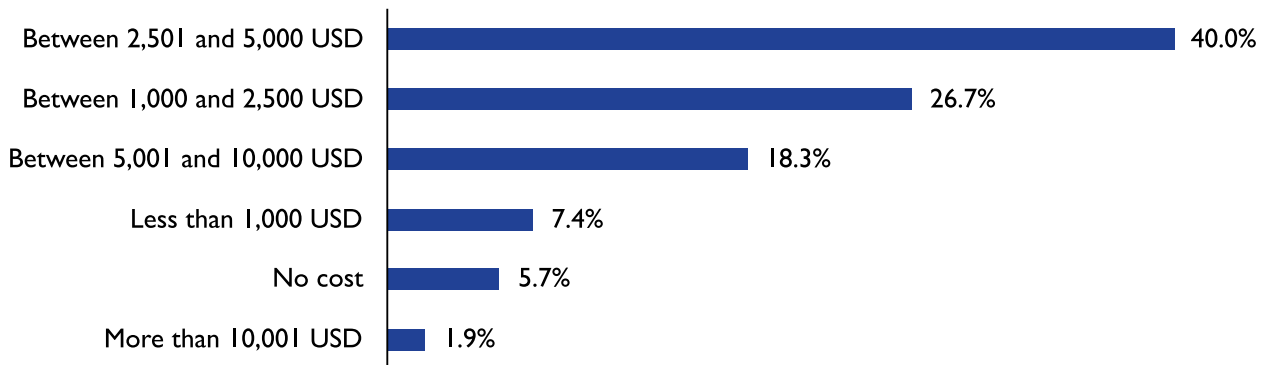
Over half (51.3%) of those who received help from someone said they received help from a friend, family or community member in their country of origin. Almost one-quarter (24.8%) said they received help from a private individual or a recruitment agency, while 12.6 per cent said it was with the help of a friend, family or community member in the country of destination and 8.8 per cent said it was from others. Relatively few respondents (2.5%) said that they received help from a future employer in the country of destination.

Almost two-thirds (64.3%) of the respondents said that they were travelling in a group, most of whom (70.3%) were travelling in a group of non-relatives, indicating that people may be forming clusters of friends or acquaintances along their journeys. One-quarter (25%) of the respondents who were travelling in a group said they were travelling with relatives while the remaining 4.7 per cent said they were travelling with facilitators.

Those who were travelling with family members reported to have been travelling with spouses and children (38.4%), with extended family (21.5%), only with spouses (15.7%), only with siblings (12.2%), with children (7.6%) or with parents (4.6%).

3.8 Cost of journey

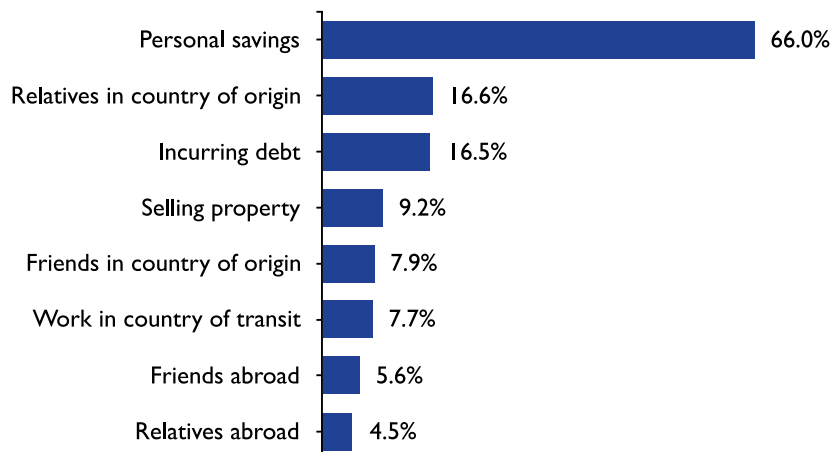
Figure 10 Cost of journey from country of origin to the time of interview



Source: DTM FMS 2022, n=1,069

Two-fifths (20%) of the respondents said that they had paid between 2,501 USD and 5,000 USD for their journeys since departing their country of origin. Over a quarter (26.7%) said that they had paid between 1,000 USD and 2,500 USD while 18.3 per cent said they paid between 5,000 USD and 10,000 USD. Less than one-tenth (7.4%) said they had paid under 1,000 USD while 5.7 per cent said there was no cost and 1.9 per cent said they paid more than 10,000 USD.

Figure 11: Source of funding for the journey¹¹



Source: DTM FMS 2022 = 1,069

When asked how they had raised their money, the majority (66%) of respondents said it was from personal savings or using their own money, followed by 16.6 per cent who reported financial help from relatives in the country of origin or habitual residence, 16.5 per cent who relied on loans or debt, and 9.2 per cent who resorted to selling private property. The rest of the respondents reported to have received financial help by friends in their country of origin or habitual residence (7.9%), to have raised money by working during the journey (7.7%), and to have received support by friends (5.6%) and relatives (4.5%) abroad.

One-third (33.3%) of the respondents said they paid for their journey per leg, while 17.8 per cent said they paid the full amount up front before departure and 17.1% said they paid in instalments through the *hawala* system.¹² Under one-fifth (15.8%) said they paid in cash instalments, 9.2 per cent indicated alternative payment modalities, and 6.8 per cent said they would pay upon arrival at the intended destination country.

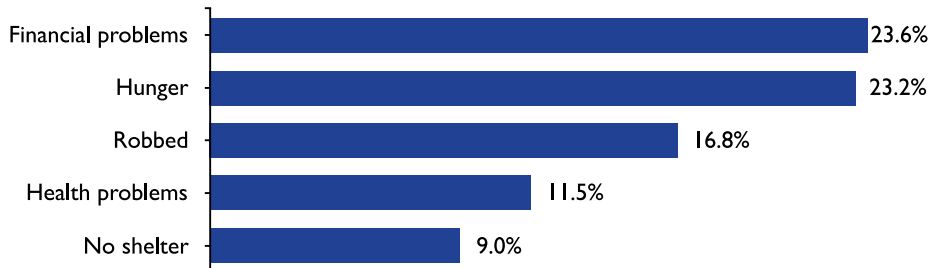
¹¹ Respondents can choose more than one option. The total percentage therefore does not add up to 100.

¹² Hawala is an informal money transfer system in which money is passed on through a network of brokers (who are known as hawaladars) without the actual/physical movement of cash. It is the transmission of money in ways other than the regular banking routes and hence sometimes called underground banking.

3.9 Problems and protection risks during the journey

Survey respondents were also asked about a list of specific incidents or problems they had faced during their journeys. Almost half (46.4%) the respondents said that they had faced at least one problem during their journeys (problems listed in the graph below).¹³ The health problems reported were mainly related to injuries related to the journey, asthma, food poisoning, cold, mental health problem but also COVID-19. Almost three-quarters (74.5%) reported having experienced these problems while in transit.

Figure 12: Main problems experienced¹⁴



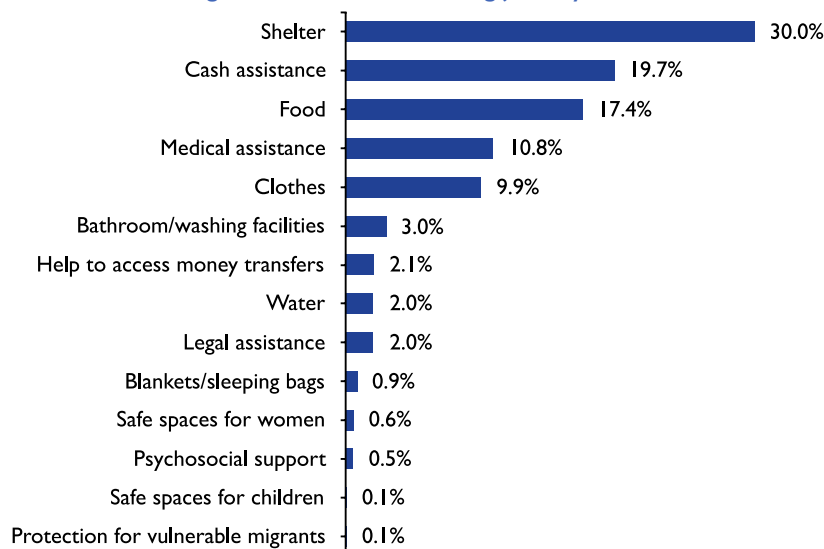
Source: DTM FMS 2022, n=1,069

Respondents were also asked if they had been readmitted to another country during their journey by the authorities of transit countries.¹⁵ Of the total survey sample, 13.9 per cent reported that they had been readmitted from one country to another. Of those to have experienced readmission, 27.6 per cent said that they had been readmitted once, while 44.8 per cent said they had been readmitted between two and five times. Additionally, 15.6 per cent said it had happened to them between six and ten times, while 11 per cent said they had been readmitted 11 times or more. Most people indicated to have been readmitted to a country from Greece (66.7%).

3.10 Main needs

Respondents were asked what their main unmet needs were during their journeys. Most of the needs they reported were practical and related to basic needs such as shelter, food, medical assistance as well as bathroom facilities, help accessing money transfers and clothing (shoes) related to the fact that people walk for prolonged periods of time.

Figure 13: Main needs during journey¹⁶



Source: DTM FMS 2022, n=1,069

13 These problems relate to issues faced during the migration journeys, and not while migrants are in reception facilities where they have recourse to services such as shelter, food, non-food items, psychosocial support and other tailored of support services.

14 Respondents can select more than one option. The total percentage therefore does not add up to 100.

15 The survey asks migrants questions about whether they have been readmitted from one country to another. Migrants may or may not know the difference between formal readmission procedures and push backs and may use or understand those terms interchangeably. Findings on readmission should therefore not be understood to definitively mean pushbacks.

16 Respondents can select more than one option. The total percentage therefore does not add up to 100.

3.11 Country of intended destination

The survey also asked respondents about their final intended destination. Overall, Germany (31.2%), Italy (17.8%) and France (14.8%) were the three main intended countries of destination. These were followed by the Netherlands (3.7%), the United Kingdom (3.7%), Austria (3.2%), Belgium (3%) and Spain (2.8%). Other countries accounted for the remaining 23.5 per cent of intended destination.

For Afghan nationals, Germany (41.9%), France (18.4%), and Italy (10.8%) were the main countries of intended destination. For Syrian nationals, it was Germany (59%) followed by the Netherlands (10.5%) and Belgium (3.5%). Pakistani nationals mostly stated that they wanted to travel to Italy (58.2%), Germany (18.7%), and Spain (3.7%). Nationals of Morocco reported the main intended destination countries to be France (40.6%), Italy (24.8%) and Germany (6.9%). Lastly, for Indian nationals, the main intended destination countries were Italy (40%), Germany (26.7%), followed by the Netherlands and France at 13.3 per cent each.

When asked the reason as to why they specifically chose those countries of destination, the most frequently reported answer was because of perceived ease of access to asylum procedures (35.2%), while 30 per cent stated it was due to appealing socio-economic conditions. Less than one-fifth (14.8%) stated that it was because they had relatives in the intended country of destination, while 6 per cent said it was due to well-established networks of diaspora communities.

Of those who mentioned Germany as their intended country of destination, 44.2 per cent said it was due to perceived ease of access to asylum seekers, while 15.5 per cent said it was due to appealing socio-economic conditions. Finally, further 15.5 per cent said it was because they had family or relatives in the Germany. For those who reported Italy as their country of intended destination, 34.6 per cent said it was due to appealing socio-economic conditions, 25.5 per cent affirmed it was due to perceived ease of access to asylum procedures, and 18.6 per cent said it was because they had relatives in Italy. Of those who stated France was their intended country of destination, 44 per cent said it was due to perceived ease of access to asylum procedures, 30.1 per cent said it was due to appealing socio-economic conditions, and 9.6 per cent said it was because they had relatives in France.

For Afghan nationals, the main reasons for choosing their intended countries of destination was appealing socio-economic conditions (27.4%), followed closely by perceived ease of access to asylum procedures (26.4%), and having relatives in the country of intended destination (15.5%). Indian nationals overwhelmingly stated appealing socio-economic conditions (79.1%). For nationals of Morocco, the most frequently cited answer was ease of access to asylum procedures (45.5%), followed by appealing socio-economic conditions (32.7%) and having relatives in the country of intended destination (percentage). Pakistani nationals indicated appealing socio-economic conditions (33.6%) as the main reason for choosing their intended country of destination, followed by ease of access to asylum procedures (27%) and having relatives in the intended country of destination (12.9%). For nationals of the Syrian Arab Republic, the most frequently cited reason was ease of access to asylum procedures (68.7%), followed by having relatives in the intended country of destination (13.4%) and appealing socio-economic conditions (12.9%).

Over half (52.9%) of the respondents reported having relatives in the country of intended destination including 13.8 per cent who reported having immediate family members (spouse, parent, or child) in the country of intended destination. Most nationals of India (70%) and Pakistan (52.6%) reported not having relatives in the country of destination. However, most Afghans (51.6%), Moroccans (52.5%), and Syrians (65.2%) reported having relatives in the intended country of destination.

Almost all (97.8%) of respondents who had family in the countries of intended destination said that they had not tried to join their family members through legal procedures.

Over two-thirds of the respondents (69.6%) said that they had no information on asylum or how to obtain documents to legally stay in the country of intended destination.

4. TRANSIT

4.1 Main border crossings

The most frequently cited border crossing in this sample was between the Republic of Türkiye and Greece with just over one-fifth of the respondents stating that they had crossed this border (20.1%). The two next most frequent border crossings were between Greece and Albania (11.9%) and the border between Greece and North Macedonia (10.6%).

Figure 14: Map of the main routes within the Western Balkans¹⁷



Source: DTM FMS 2022, n=1,069

4.2 Mode of transport

The majority of border crossings were made on foot (62.2%), while 25.6 per cent were made by vehicle or trains. Just under one-tenth (9.7%) were made by air and 2.5 per cent were made by boat. Of the top five nationalities, Moroccan and Indian nationals were more likely to make border crossings by air with flights making up 27.6 and 51.1 per cent of all border crossings respectively. The most frequently used air border crossing was the Morocco- Republic of Türkiye route, which made up 28.6 per cent of all air border crossings. This was followed by the India-Serbia route which consisted of 16.6 per cent of all air border crossings. Almost two-thirds (64.1%) of all border crossings made by Afghan nationals were made by foot similarly to Syrian nationals, who reported to have crossed borders predominantly by foot (77%).

¹⁷ This map is for illustrative purpose only. Names and boundaries do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations and participating organizations.

5. FOCUS ON AFGHANS

This section presents the profile and main characteristics of Afghan nationals interviewed in Albania, BiH, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Kosovo*, with the aim of providing a more detailed analysis of changes in profiles after the Taliban takeover of Kabul in August 2021. The section is based on all of the interviews with Afghan nationals in the countries and territories in the WB.

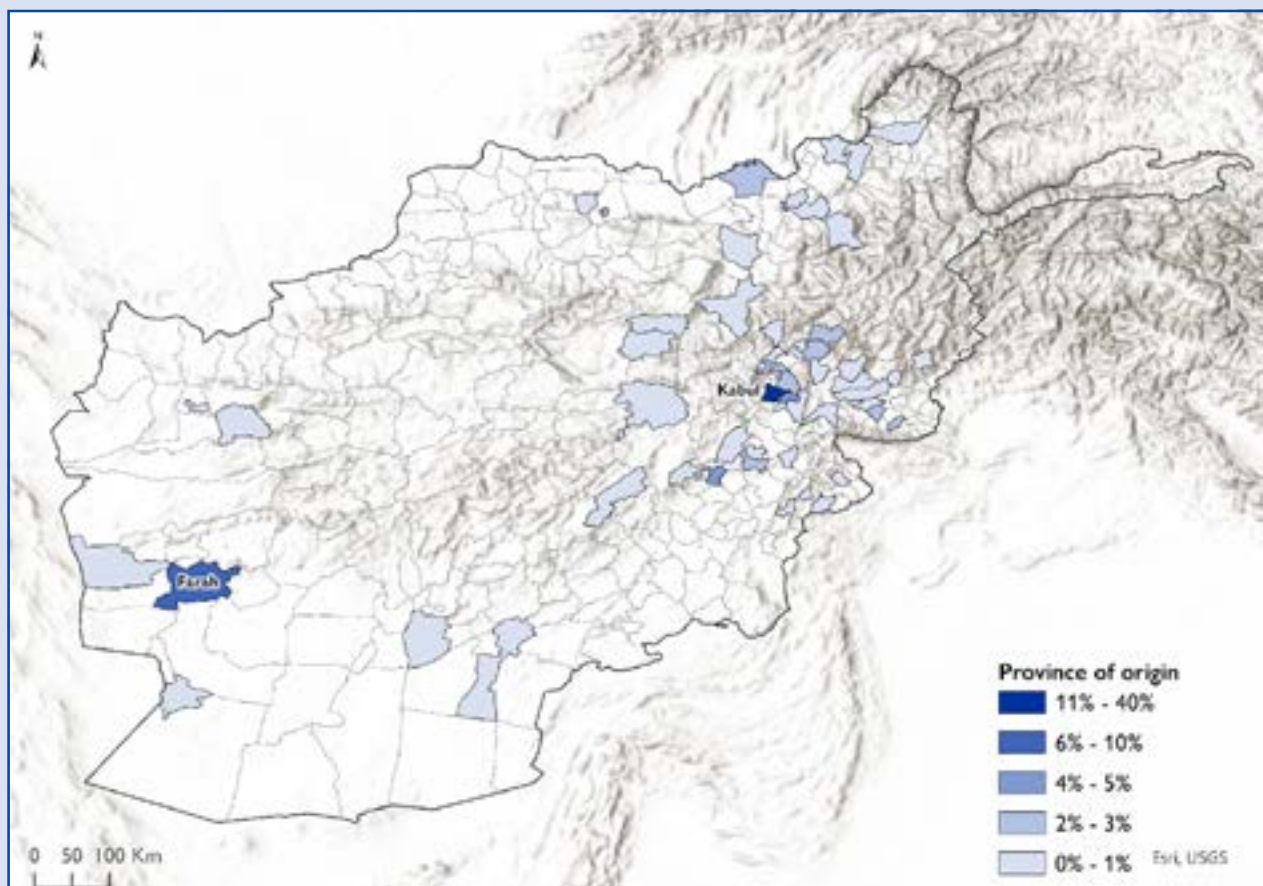
5.1 Demographic profile

In this survey, IOM interviewed a total of 277 respondents from Afghanistan, representing 25.9% of the total sample. The youngest respondent was 18 and the oldest was 57 with a median age of 25. Ninety-five per cent of the respondents were male. The majority of the sample (78.3%) were single, while 20.6 per cent were married and 1.1 per cent reported to be widowed. Almost one-fifth of the Afghan respondents (19.1%) had children, almost half of whom (49.1%) had children in Afghanistan and just over half of whom (51%) were travelling with their children.

Most of the Afghans interviewed (59.2%) were travelling in a group of people, either with a group of acquaintances (63%), with family (30%), or with facilitators (7%).

The main provinces of origin in Afghanistan were Kabul (25.6%), Herat (10.1%), and Nangarhar (5.8%). The main languages spoken were Farsi (46.2%), Pashtu (30.7%), Dari (15.5%) and Urdu (5.1%).

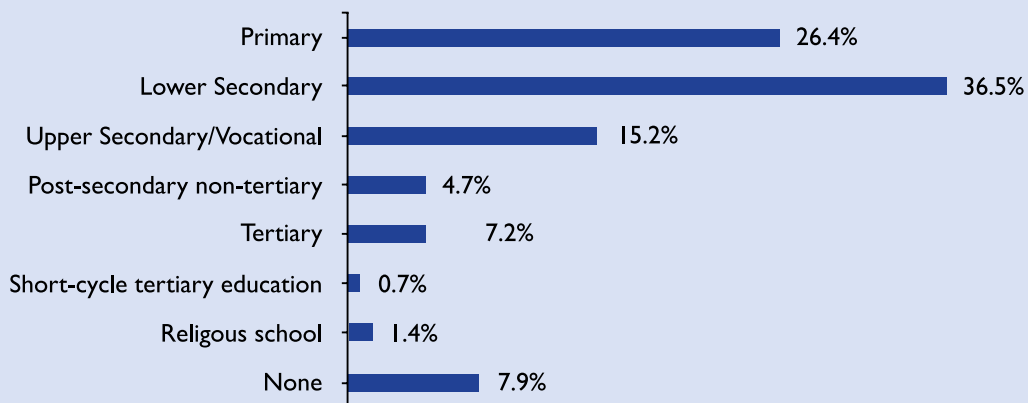
Figure 15: Provinces of origin in Afghanistan¹⁸



¹⁸ This map is for illustrative purpose only. Names and boundaries do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations and participating organizations

5.2 Education

Figure 16: Highest level of educational attainment



Source: DTM FMS 2022, n=277

The educational profiles of Afghan nationals are generally mixed, but most of the respondents have completed some cycle of formal education. On average, the respondents had completed 10 years of formal education. Almost two-thirds (64.3%) had completed at least a lower secondary education,¹⁹ while 7.9 per cent had not completed any formal education.

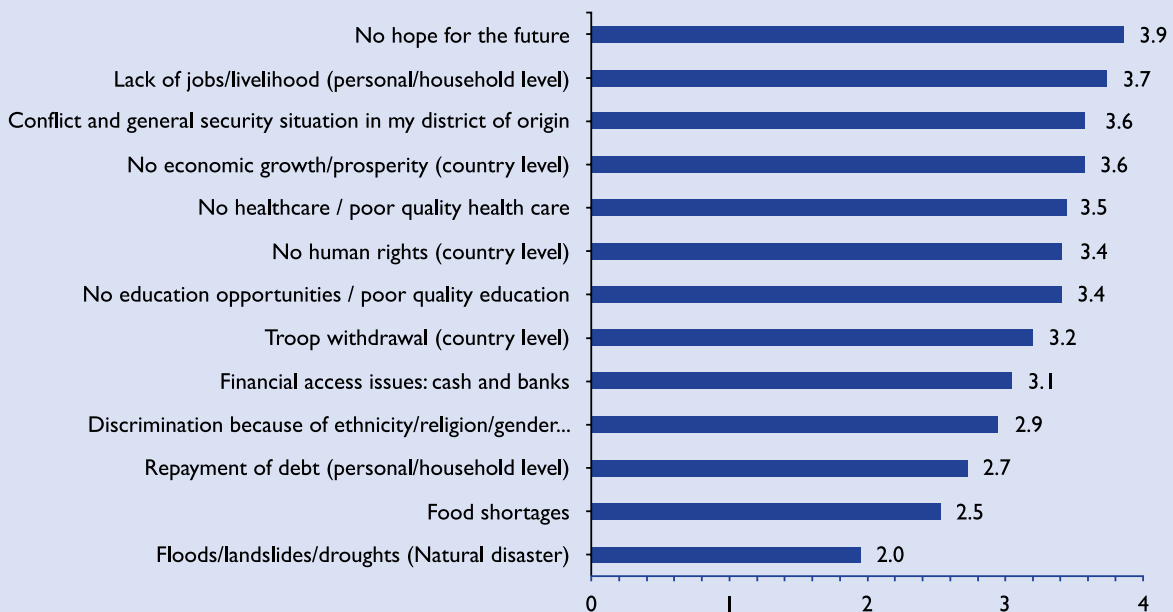
5.3 Employment

Over one-third (38.8%) of the Afghans surveyed were employed prior to leaving Afghanistan. A further 13.6 per cent were full-time students in Afghanistan. Over one-third (35.7%) were unemployed and looking for work while 12 per cent were unemployed and not looking for work.

5.4 Reason for leaving Afghanistan

The most frequently cited reasons for leaving Afghanistan were war and conflict (72.6%), economic reasons (14.4%), limited access to basic services (5.4%), and personal or targeted violence (2.9%). The survey asked Afghan nationals to rate the importance of specific drivers of migration on a scale from zero to four, with zero being very unimportant and four being very important. A lack of hope in the future, received the highest rating with 3.9, which was followed by a lack of jobs/livelihood.

Figure 17 :Highest level of educational attainment



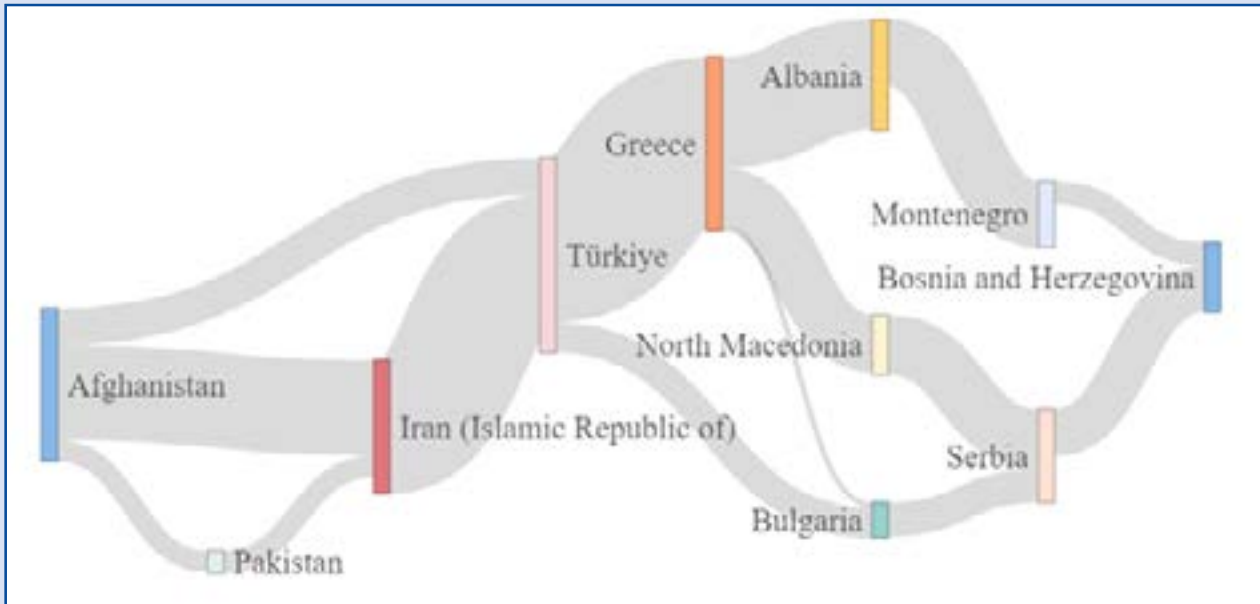
Source: DTM FMS 2022, n=277

¹⁹ This is calculated by aggregating those who have completed lower secondary, upper secondary, post-secondary but non-tertiary, short-cycle tertiary and tertiary education.

5.5 Routes travelled

Most Afghan nationals travelled from Afghanistan through the Islamic Republic of Iran and then onward to the Republic of Türkiye and Greece. From Greece, the route splits with Afghans travelling either through Albania, Montenegro and then BiH. Alternatively, once in Greece, they cross the border into North Macedonia and then Serbia.

Figure 18: Main routes travelled by respondents leaving Afghanistan



Source: DTM FMS 2022, n=277

6. VULNERABILITIES, VIOLENCE, EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE

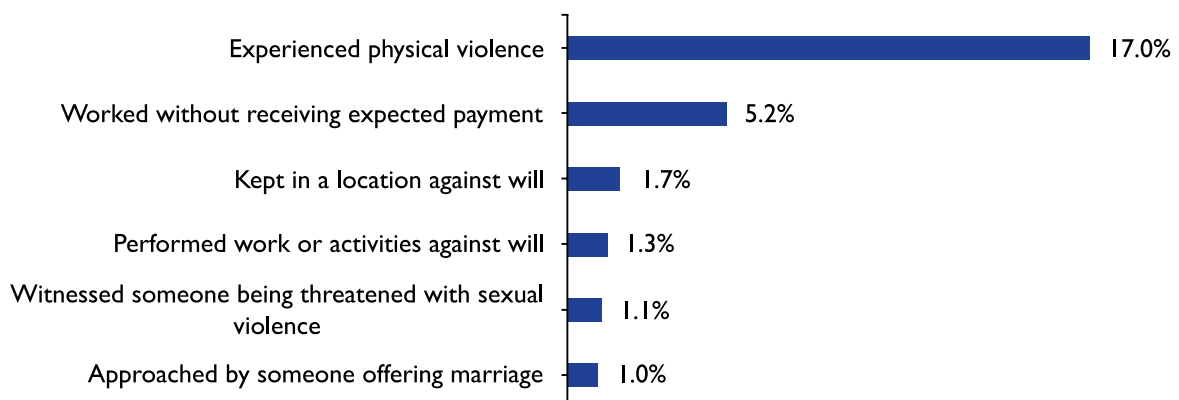
The FMS questionnaire also includes a module which gathers information on migrants’ vulnerabilities and any potential incidents of abuse, violence and exploitation they may have experienced or witnessed during their journeys. More specifically, the survey includes six questions to capture information about whether respondents, at any point during their journeys, had:

1. Worked or performed activities without getting the expected payment.
2. Been forced to perform work or activities against their will.
3. Been approached by someone offering marriage.
4. Been kept at a certain location against their will (by persons other than authorities of the country).
5. Experienced some form of physical violence.
6. Witnessed someone being threatened with sexual violence.

These six questions relate to an event, that might indicate exposure to human trafficking, exploitation and abuse practices, physical and sexual violence, experienced by the respondent directly or by one of his/her family member, or witnessed by the respondent during the journey.

The experiences described in these questions do not aim to identify cases of human trafficking as defined by international and national legal instruments. If interviewers came across respondents who requested further support, they referred these cases to the relevant protection actor. Overall, 19.8 per cent of the respondents answered “yes” to at least one of the six indicators of human trafficking, exploitation and abuse.

Figure 19: Counter-trafficking indicators



Source: DTM FMS 2022, n=1,069

6.1 Experiences of physical violence

Among the indicators of violence and abuse included in the survey, experiences of physical violence are the most frequently reported by migrants in the sample, with nearly one-fifth of the respondents stating that they had experiences of physical violence during their journeys. Over a quarter of Afghan nationals (26%) reported to have experienced some form of violence. Pakistani and Moroccan nationals also reported experiencing some form of physical violence, with 31 and 21 per cent respectively. Indian and Syrian nationals reported to have experienced physical violence relatively less often, with 7.5 per cent and 6 per cent respectively. Over one-third (34.4%) of those who were facilitated in their journeys had experiences of violence, while 11.2 per cent of those travelling with family reported experiencing violence.

6.2 Sexual violence

Of the total survey respondents, 1.1 per cent stated that they had witnessed someone being threatened with sexual violence, whereas 3.4 per cent of all female respondents responded affirmatively to having witnessed someone being threatened with sexual violence.

6.3 Forced labour

Of the total survey respondents, 1.3 per cent stated that they had been forced to perform work or other activities against their will. All of the respondents who experienced this were male. Most of the experiences of forced labour occurred in the Republic of Türkiye (33%), Greece (20%) and North Macedonia (13%). The main types of activities people reported having been forced to carry out were cleaning (apartments and buildings) as well as manufacturing and construction sites.

6.4 Labour exploitation

For those who stated that themselves or someone in their family had worked without receiving the expected payments, the main sectors of the economy in which this occurred were construction, factory workers, the services sector and the textile industry. Most of the experiences of labour exploitation occurred in the Republic of Türkiye (62.3%) and Greece (26.4%).

6.5 Offers of arranged marriage

One per cent of the total survey respondents indicated that either they themselves or someone in their family was approached and offered a marriage. Of these, 30 per cent were female respondents and 70 per cent were male respondents.

6.6 Being kept at a certain location against their will

The module asks survey respondents whether they have been kept against their will at a specific location by persons other than official authorities. Of the total sample, 2 per cent stated that they had been kept at a location against their will. This had mostly happened in Greece (39%) and the Republic of Türkiye (33%).

7. COVID-19

Just under half of the survey respondents (46%) said that they were vaccinated against COVID-19. Of the 54 per cent who were unvaccinated, 69.5 per cent said that they did not want to be vaccinated, while 12.1 per cent said they would like to and 18.3 per cent were unsure. Most respondents (64.5%) did not encounter any COVID-19 related challenges along their journeys. Among those who encountered problems, 10.8 per cent were diagnosed with COVID-19 but recovered.

8. RETURN INTENTIONS

The vast majority of the survey respondents (93.4%) reported they had not considered returning to their country of origin during their journey so far. Almost three fourths (71.1%) of the respondents who considered returning indicated they were too exhausted from their current living conditions to continue the journey. The majority (80%) of those who had not considered returning simply stated that they were not interested in returning, while 11.7 per cent stated that it was due to ongoing security issues in their country of origin and 5.9 per cent said it was due to an overriding desire to join family in the country of destination.

Just over half (50.6%) of the respondents said they were aware of IOM's Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) program, which aims to help migrants make informed and voluntary decisions about returning to their country of origin.

9. METHODOLOGY

Flow Monitoring Surveys (FMS) were conducted as part of Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) activities in the Mediterranean that have started in October 2015 and are being conducted within the framework of IOM's research on populations on the move, through the Mediterranean and Western Balkans (WB) Routes to Europe. The data collection involves direct interviews with migrants and collation of statistical data on arrivals and migrant presence in reception and outside from national authorities and IOM staff presence. Regular updates on arrivals are available on [DTM Flows to Europe Geoportals](#).

The surveys were administered by IOM field staff between 1 June and 7 October 2022 in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Kosovo*. The survey is designed to profile third country (non-European) nationals who are moving to Europe by land and by sea through the WB route. Only migrants aged 14 and above are approached and the questionnaire is proposed only to migrants and refugees who have arrived in the country of the survey no more than one year prior to the interview. The IOM requires the written consent of the parents or legal guardians of potential survey respondents under the age of 18.

The FMS questionnaire was available in e-format in Kobo (English and French) and in paper forms translated into Arabic, English, Farsi, French, Pashto and Urdu. Respondents were approached in a simple random sample by IOM field staff working in the TRCs, with those who give their consent to be interviewed proceeding with the remaining questions. The interviews were anonymous and conducted one-on-one with respondents, in safe and isolated spaces, also considering the COVID-19 regulations in force in BiH at the time of the data collection. Migrants could decline to respond to individual questions or to interrupt the interview if they wish to do so.

9.1 Sampling

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH)

The sample frame consists of the total number of migrants in Temporary Reception Centres (TRCs) in BiH above the age of 14. IOM BiH used a systematic random sampling procedure, where the members of the total population of study are placed in a sequence and then chosen at regular intervals. The population list is in random order, therefore there is no cyclically or periodically inherence related to the frame. On the 25 June 2022 the size of the frame was 2,282 migrants. The sample size of 350 respondents is defined according to a confidence level of 95% and 5% margin of error. According to the selected procedure, the size of the sample frame has been divided by sample size. That provided 6 as the index number and after the initial member had been randomly selected, every sixth member was selected sequentially.

The sampling frame was agreed with the regional DTM team to ensure the consistency and solidity of the final sample for research purposes, reflecting the general demographic profile of migrant presence in reception centres of the country in the covered period.

Serbia

In Serbia, IOM applied a non-random, convenience sampling procedure due to the availability to reception centres in Serbia, which may have introduced some sample bias.

Montenegro

In Montenegro, the sampling objective was to attempt to replicate the composition of migrants in one temporary reception center by choosing a convenient timing for the survey. The sample frame was therefore defined by one temporary reception center, where potential sample bias may occur due to the sampling procedure that assumed occasional survey visits to the center. During those visits, the sample size was almost equal to the sample frame disposable at that moment. Nevertheless, the choice of the moment and sample size in that specific moment was conditioned by an assessment made by experienced staff on the field, where the judgment was used to define the optimal representativeness of the sample frame for the target population in that specific moment. Certain robustness of findings is expected due to the sample size compared to the sample frame.

North Macedonia

In North Macedonia the survey assumed a non-random selection of respondents. Overall robustness of quality of work in North Macedonia was assured by the enumerator's competency and experience.

Kosovo*

In Kosovo*, the sampling procedure combines convenient samples with certain complexity in terms of the variety of locations where the survey was conducted. It was not possible to impose parameters or selection criteria because migrants were legally limited to staying in one place for more than 72 hours. The survey was conducted sequentially either in reception centers, or simply the location where migrants were gathered. IOM conducted the survey, where the sample size was equal to the sample frame, but, only in that specific moment. Therefore, the overall sample frame was unknown.

9.2 The questionnaire

DTM's FMS baseline module captures data on the demographic profile of the respondents, their education and employment background, the circumstances of their migration journey and migration factors, their place of origin or their last country of habitual residence, and their future intentions with regards to the country of destination.

The second FMS module contains questions that refer to experience exploitation, violence and abuse that may amount to human trafficking. The module was prepared together with IOM's Migrant Protection and Assistance Division and gathers information on events and practices, experienced directly by the respondent or by his/her family member(s), or that are witnessed by the respondent during the journey.

The third FMS module contains questions related to the COVID-19 pandemic, focusing primarily on personal knowledge and awareness of coronavirus disease symptoms among respondents and on travel restrictions related to COVID-19, and if they had already access to vaccination.

The set of questions was designed to understand whether migrants are aware of COVID-19 symptoms, mitigation measures, and how potential restrictions may have impacted their migration journey and the economic situation of respondents and of their families in terms of ability to send and/or receive financial remittances.

The fourth module contains questions related to return intentions. As outreach activities on the existence and functioning of AVRR were run by IOM in the country, this module of the FMS – to avoid repetitions – only ask respondents few questions on the intention to return to the country of origin and awareness and knowledge of the AVRR options available.

9.3 Limitations

The data presented in this document are representative of the individuals surveyed in the covered locations and during the indicated timeframe. The data should not be generalized and should not represent a full picture of regional migration, but rather of migratory flows in the specific locations monitored in the countries or territories of the WB during the period covered.

It should also be noted that a lower percentage of women of the total migrants in the Western Balkans were interviewed, for several reasons, including that women may be less willing to talk even when female enumerators are deployed. Moreover, women tend to travel alone less often than men, and, often due to cultural reasons, it has proved to be more difficult to approach women when travelling with male family members.