

## HIGHLIGHTS

**Approximately 784 people** remain at the logistics facility

**220 people** benefited from Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) in 2022 as of 17 February

**1,630kg of food and 2,616 packs of drinks and fruit puree for children** were distributed among migrants at the logistics facility in the reporting period



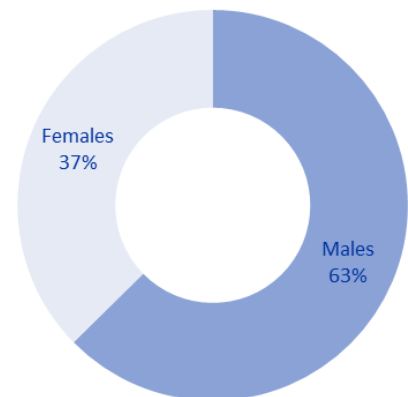
IOM representative talking to kids at the logistics facility  
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## SITUATION OVERVIEW

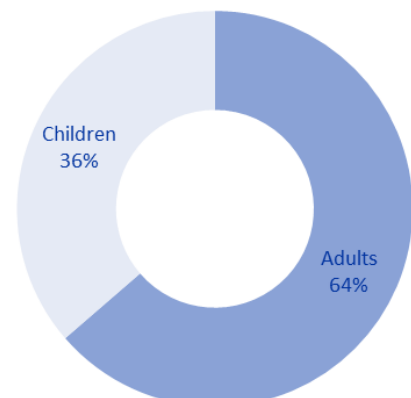
According to data available after the voluntary registration conducted by the International Federation of Red Cross (IFRC) and the Belarusian Red Cross (BRC), there are **784 people** (293 women, 491 men, including 285 kids) at the Bruzgi logistics centre. The number of migrants in the facility has been relatively stable over the past weeks as the number of people willing to use an AVRR option reduced.

After being registered, **people accommodated at the facility received personal cards**, which are used every time they receive assistance, including food and non-food items (NFI). Such a procedure helps to ensure the equitable distribution of aid among migrants.

In addition to IOM Belarus office in Minsk, IOM staff remain present in Grodno to have regular access to the migrants at the logistics facility, at the hotel in Minsk where migrants are accommodated before their departure to the countries of origin and in Minsk National Airport to provide AVRR outreach, counseling, and registration services.



Share of males and females among migrants at the logistics facility



Share of adults and children among migrants at the logistics facility

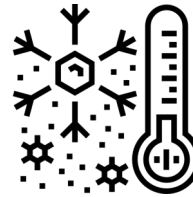
## CONTACTS

## NEEDS OVERVIEW

IOM's **needs assessment** continues to be the foundation on which the Organization's humanitarian aid procurement and delivery are based. The assessment is updated biweekly. The latest update happened on 14 February and outlined the same priority needs as shared in the last situation report:



FOOD



WINTERIZATION  
NEEDS



HEALTH SERVICES



NON-FOOD  
ITEMS

## CURRENT RESPONSE ACTIVITIES

The **Refugee and Migrant Task Force**, consisting of relevant stakeholders, operates on a weekly basis. On 15 February, it was IOM's turn to chair the meeting. New directions of work were presented and flagged, including **strengthening of community engagement**, **improvement of information sharing among migrants**, **development of the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) form** to be further disseminated among migrants, **establishment of the pool of interpreters**, and **improvement of primary medical assistance** for those stranded at the border.

### HEALTH ASSISTANCE

As health needs remain among the priority needs for migrants, IOM continues to implement relevant health programming and develop efficient channels for the delivery of services.

Currently, IOM provides **health support at the hotel** in Minsk to migrants who are now awaiting departure to their home countries through the AVRR programme. The IOM doctor provided **primary health checks** and four migrants were found not fit to travel, **three migrants were referred to undergo electrocardiography** and **one migrant was hospitalized** when cardiac problems were diagnosed. Colds and flu are among other general medical conditions that are typical among migrants. **Mental health and psychosocial support services (MHPSS)** are regularly provided upon request.

In addition, IOM provides **medical services at the logistics facility**. A **referral system for migrants with serious medical conditions is established** there. The migrants are referred to three local medical establishments (the Regional Clinical Hospital, the Regional Children's Hospital and the LODE Medical Center) for specialized medical consultations and further treatment if necessary. Seven consultations were held during the reporting period and four medical consultations are scheduled for the upcoming week.



IOM doctor providing medical services at the logistics facility  
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IOM staff consulting a representative of the Yazidi community  
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Prior to departure through the AVRR programme, every AVRR beneficiary undergoes a **pre-embarkation check (PEC)**, which includes COVID-19 PCR testing, a COVID-19 symptoms check, a physical examination of blood pressure, pulse, body temperature and saturation, lice and scabies testing, and the identification of any urgent medical interventions that could prevent the person from traveling. Between 4 and 17 February, IOM provided PECs for **51 applicants**. Three people tested positive for COVID-19 and one applicant was found unfit to travel due to health issues.

All migrants departing under the AVRR programme from Minsk are equipped with travel kits to support adherence to COVID-19 health and travel requirements. These kits include medical masks, hand sanitizers, and tissues.

**HUMANITARIAN AID**

Delivery of humanitarian aid to migrants stranded at the Bruzgi facility took place on 4, 9, 11 and 16 February. IOM delivered the following food items: **960kg of fresh bread, 324kg of bananas, 346kg of apples, 522 packs of fruit juice for children, 510 packs of milk, and 1,584 packs of fruit puree for children.**

All migrants at the hotel, on average 25 people per week, are provided with hot meals three times a day, totaling approximately **750 meals** during the reporting period.

Options for improvement of community engagement are continuously explored. To enhance information sharing among the migrants, **two leaflets were developed**: one on AVRR and one on health risks. The issue of up-to-date information provision to migrants was also discussed with the partners, including UN agencies and NGOs. **A set of Frequently Asked Questions** was drafted jointly with UNHCR with inputs from other UN agencies, to be further published and distributed among migrants.

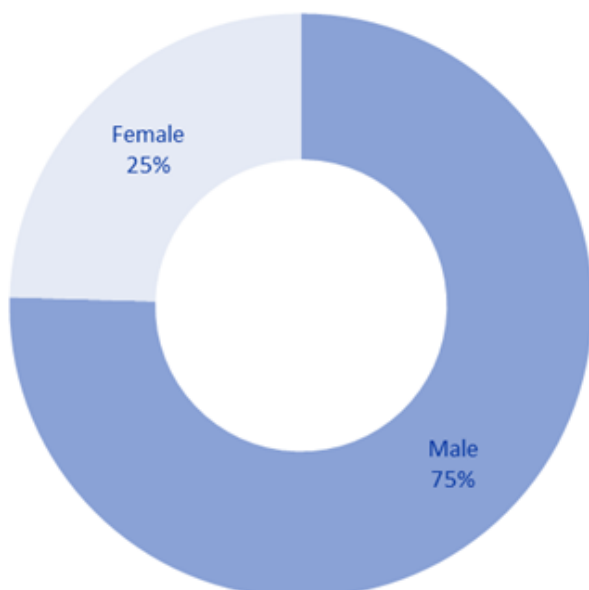


Weekly humanitarian aid from IOM Belarus © IOM 2022 / Hanna Kalichava

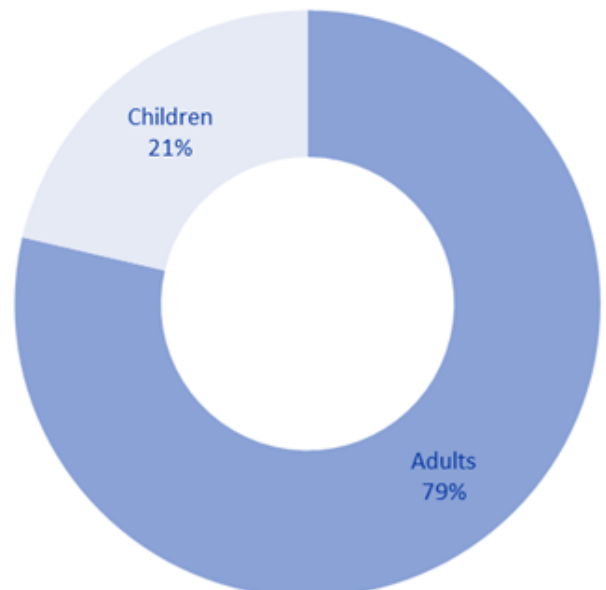
IOM is currently considering the possibility **to create a pool of interpreters**, as there is a need for interpretation and translation to/from Kurdish, English, or Russian, as most of the migrants speak Kurdish. It will be important to engage both male and female interpreters to ensure a culturally sensitive approach and the comfort of beneficiaries.

**ASSISTED VOLUNTARY RETURN AND REINTEGRATION (AVRR)**

IOM continues to offer the option of safe and dignified return to migrants' home countries through its AVRR programme. **As of 17 February, 220 people benefited from AVRR in 2022.**

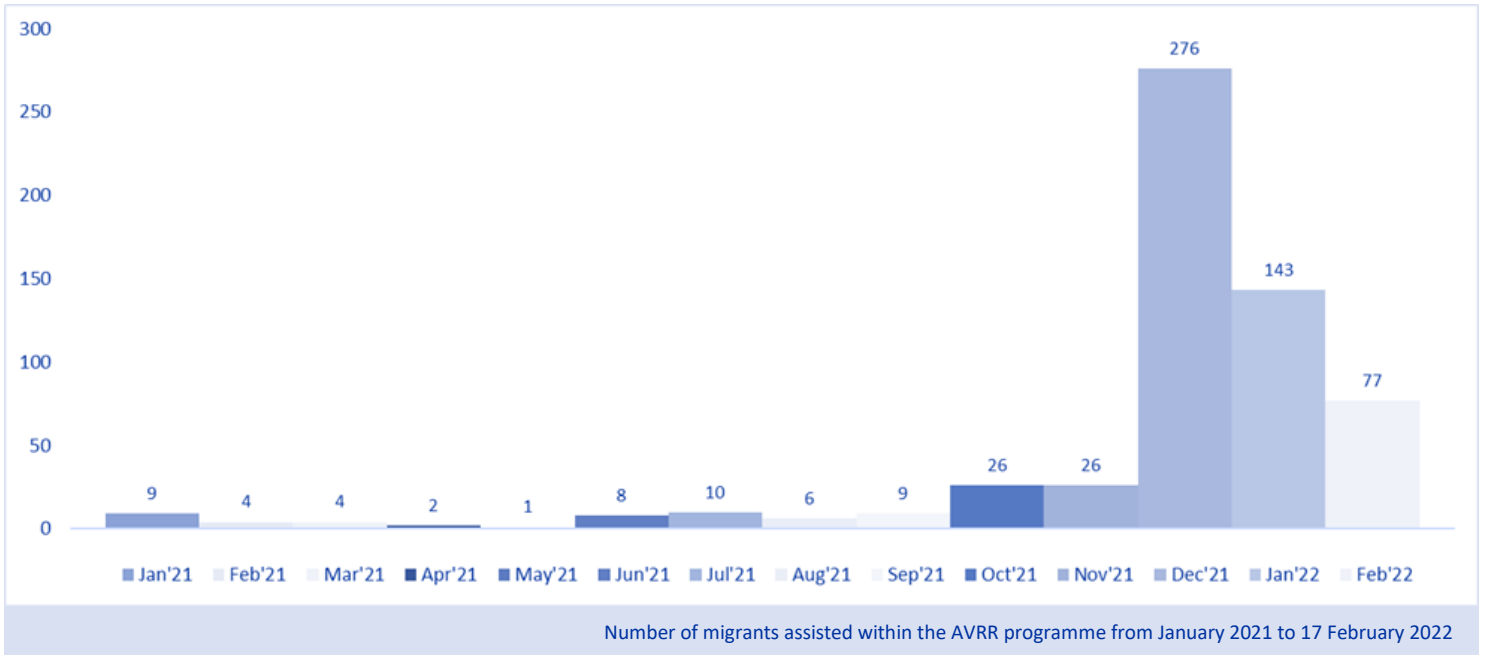


Gender of the AVRR beneficiaries in 2022 (as of 17 February)



Number of adults and children among the AVRR beneficiaries in 2022 (as of 17 February)



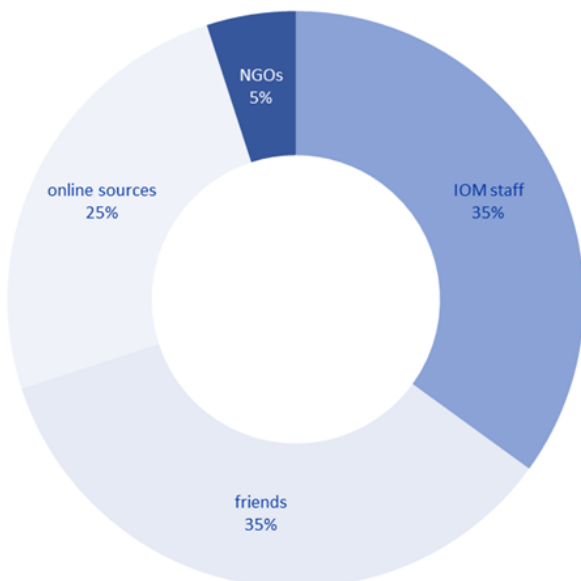


From 4 to 17 February, **45 migrants** benefited from the AVRR programme and returned to their countries of origin with IOM assistance via commercial flights. Among them, six migrants – four Sri Lankan citizens, one Algerian citizen and one Egyptian citizen – were referred to IOM by the Belarusian law enforcement authorities.

IOM has registered a decreased interest in the AVRR option from stranded migrants at the border. Despite the fact that AVRR registration at the logistics facility is available regularly, during the reporting period, no new beneficiaries were registered. In response to this trend, IOM has stepped up its migrant outreach and counselling efforts to provide the most accurate information possible for migrants to take an informed decision on their options. In addition, an information campaign on AVRR targeting vulnerable migrants is being developed.



AVRR beneficiary at the airport before his departure to Iraq © IOM 2022 / Hanna Kalichava



Sources of information about the AVRR programme for stranded migrants

There are 8 people at the hotel in Minsk where the migrants were transported to from the logistics facility.

In cases when AVRR beneficiaries do not have valid travel documents, IOM requests them from the relevant embassies in Moscow, which then provide the documents for the return journey. In the reporting period, such documents were issued for one Algerian and one Egyptian citizen.

The AVRR assessment was updated and demonstrated that **the majority of the returnees are Iraqi nationals and mostly male (84%** of all those benefiting from AVRR).

They receive information about the AVRR programme from IOM staff, friends, the internet/social media, and NGOs.

## COOPERATION WITH NGOS

IOM continues its cooperation with two partner NGOs – the BRC and the Belarusian Movement of Medical Workers (BMMW) – on the response to the stranded migrants.

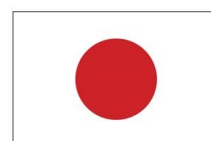
The BMMW provided AVRR counselling to 54 migrants in the reporting period. Furthermore, they provide regular technical and administrative support for the IOM project site in Grodno.

Sports equipment and educational games for children stranded at the border were procured and distributed by the BRC. In addition, the NGO is carrying out the necessary procedures for the procurement of hygiene and food kits.



IOM Belarus hands over the humanitarian aid to BRC to be further distributed among migrants © IOM 2022 / Hanna Kalichava

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