

HIGHLIGHTS

Approximately 737 people remain at the logistics facility.

242 people benefited from Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) in 2022 as of 3 March.

1,252kg of food, 18kg of soap, 300 sets of toothpaste and toothbrushes were distributed among migrants at the logistics facility in the reporting period.

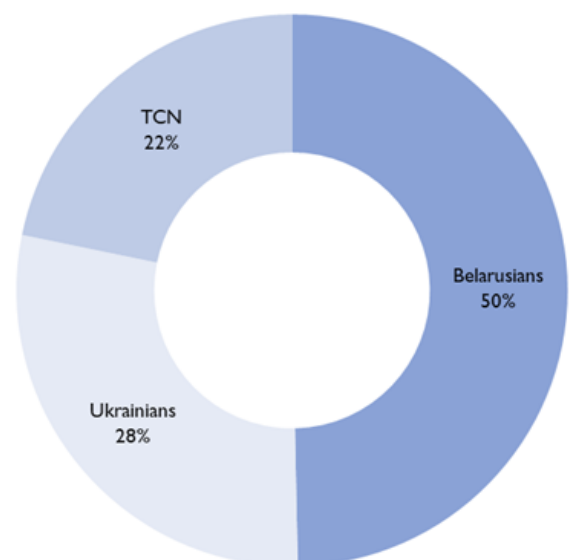


AVRR beneficiaries departing from Minsk airport © IOM 2022 / Hanna Kalichava

SITUATION OVERVIEW

The estimated number of migrants at the Bruzgi logistics centre is 737 people. It is based on the number of migrants registered by the International Federation of Red Cross (IFRC) and the Belarusian Red Cross (BRC), noting that 36 AVRR beneficiaries and 11 other migrants left the facility in the reporting period. IOM and other UN agencies together with the BRC are exploring opportunities to use registration cards given to migrants to track any changes in their number at the logistics centre. So far, these cards are only used to track the provision of non-food items (NFI).

Due to the ongoing humanitarian situation in Ukraine, there has been an influx of migrants from Ukraine to the neighboring countries. According to IOM, as of 2 March, 453,000 migrants fled to Poland, 129,000 to Russia, 128,090 to Moldova, 102,084 to Romania, 66,299 to Slovakia, and 62,736 to Hungary. The Belarusian State Border Committee reported 900 entries from Ukraine to Belarus since 24 February – among these migrants are 257 Ukrainian nationals, 447 Belarusians and 196 Third Country Nationals (TCN).



Nationalities of migrants entering Belarus from Ukraine since 24 February

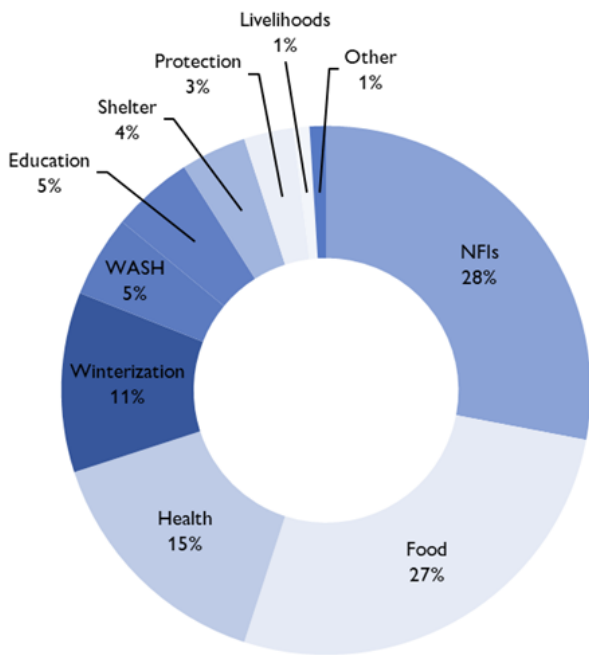
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NEEDS OVERVIEW



Needs assessment of migrants at the Bruzgi logistics centre

The results of IOM's needs assessment were updated as of 1 March 2022. Currently, the **top four priorities** are as follows:

- Non-food items (NFI);
- Food items;
- Health;
- Winterization.

The results confirm the ongoing need for food items, improvement in primary medical care for the stranded migrants, winterization support, and increased NFIs.

CURRENT RESPONSE ACTIVITIES

The UN Refugee and Migrant Task Force continued its operation. The last meeting took place on 1 March 2022 and was chaired by IOM. The most crucial issues discussed include:



improvement of primary medical services to stranded migrants with further referrals to medical institutions if needed



treatment for pediculosis



finalization of the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) for migrants



possible solutions for improvement of sanitary conditions

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 awaiting departure to their home countries through the AVRR programme. In the reporting period, ten people approached the IOM doctor with mild symptoms of flu and colds and received the necessary medications. Mental health and psychosocial support services (MHPSS) are regularly provided upon request. For the reporting period, IOM conducted 45 psychological consultations. The main concerns were anxiety and sleeping disorders. Twelve applicants were tested through IOM's Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9).

Starting from 1 March, a permanent primary healthcare unit has been set up in the Bruzgi centre, with a general practitioner and a nurse hired by WHO. IOM is working with WHO and health practitioners there to integrate an established system of IOM medical referral. The migrants with signs of worsening conditions and those who need supportive treatment to ensure continuity of care are examined and 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.

Five consultations were held during the reporting period, including comprehensive laboratory diagnostics and involving the use of advanced imaging technology like ultrasound scans, for two women with the history of cancer. Four medical consultations are scheduled for the upcoming week.

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 18 February and 4 March, IOM provided PECs for 24 applicants. All applicants were fit to travel.

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

Humanitarian aid was delivered to Bruzgi logistics centre and distributed to migrants on 22 and 25 February and on 2 March 2022. IOM delivered 720kg of fresh pitta bread, 239kg of bananas, 273kg of apples, 20kg of stewed canned chicken, 18kg of toilet soap, and 300 sets of toothpaste and toothbrushes.

IOM has procured 200 sprays for pediculosis treatment, which will be delivered to migrants at the Bruzgi centre in the coming days.

Hot meals were provided three times a day to all migrants at the hotel near Minsk airport registered for AVRR, averaging 23 people per week and totaling 963 meals in the reporting period. Hygiene items (shampoos, toothbrushes, razors, shower gel, diapers) and water were delivered to these migrants as well.

A Frequently Asked Questions form was finalized jointly with UNHCR and other UN agencies and partners involved in the response actions. It is being translated into Arabic and Kurdish.

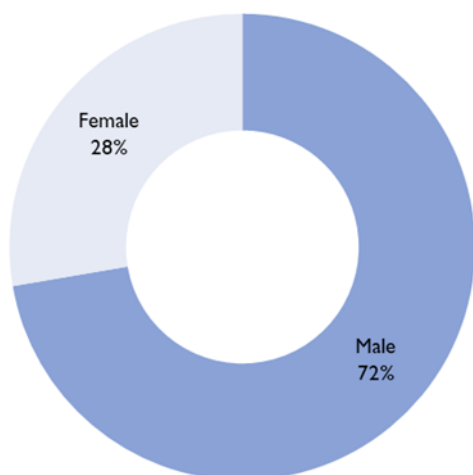


IOM Belarus delivers humanitarian aid to be further distributed among migrants © IOM 2022 / Hanna Kalichava

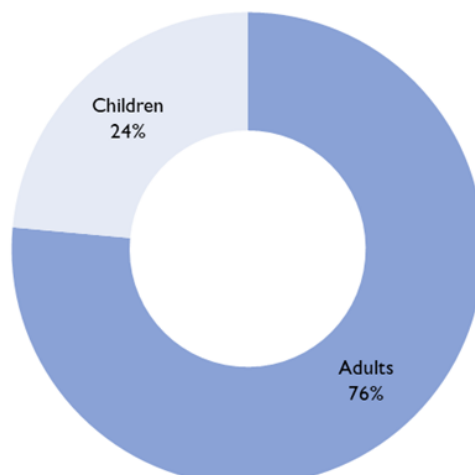
Options and possibilities for the delivery of humanitarian aid to the vulnerable groups who entered the territory of Belarus from Ukraine were explored during the joint field visit to Gomel city with UNHCR on 1 March. Meetings with the potential partner NGOs, including Gomel branch of BRC, Gomel branch of the Belarusian Movement of Medical Workers (BMMW) and Gomel branch of the Belarusian Young Christian Women Association, and other stakeholders were held to ensure preparedness for an effective and targeted response to the ongoing situation.

ASSISTED VOLUNTARY RETURN AND REINTEGRATION (AVRR)

IOM continues to offer the option of safe and dignified return to migrants' countries of origin through its AVRR programme. As of 3 March, 242 people benefited from AVRR in 2022. Approximately 88% of the beneficiaries are Iraqi citizens.



Gender of the AVRR beneficiaries in 2022 (as of 3 March)



Number of adults and children among the AVRR beneficiaries in 2022 (as of 3 March)

From 18 February to 3 March, 22 migrants benefited from the AVRR programme and returned to their countries of origin (16 to Iraq and 6 to Turkey) with IOM assistance via commercial flights. All of them were registered at the Bruzgi facility.



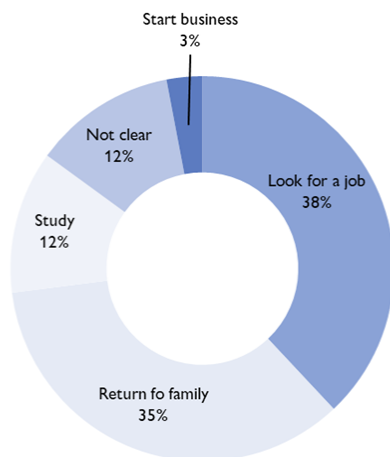
AVRR beneficiary going through the pre-departure procedure © IOM 2022 / Hanna Kalichava



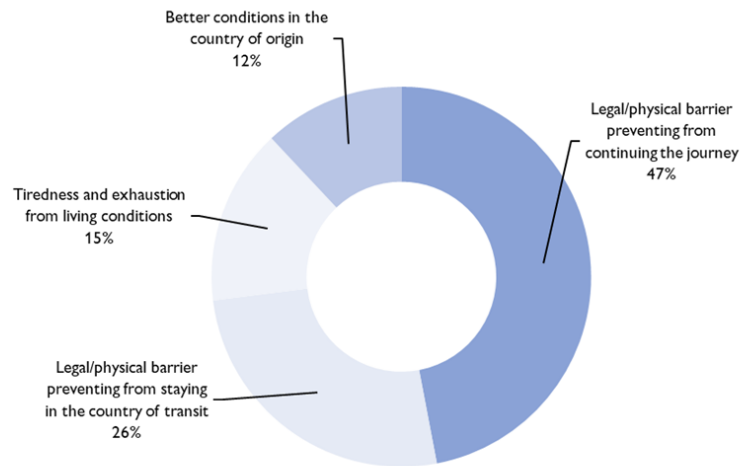
AVRR beneficiary checking in for the flight home © IOM 2022 / Hanna Kalichava

There are 54 AVRR applicants at the hotel in Minsk, 52 of whom are Iraqis. They were either transported from the logistics facility or directly approached IOM from the rest of the country.

The AVRR assessment, which is conducted among urban migrants who approach IOM Belarus, was updated on 1 March and demonstrated that the majority of the returnees are male Iraqi nationals who have been in Belarus for over 3 months. Upon their return to the country of origin, they are planning to return to their families, study or look for a job.



Plans of AVRR beneficiaries upon return to their countries of origin according to the AVRR assessment updated on 1 March



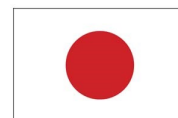
Reasons to return to the country of origin for migrants according to the AVRR assessment updated on 1 March

COOPERATION WITH PARTNERS

During the reporting period, the BMMW provided 107 consultations on AVRR to urban migrants in Grodno. Technical support to the IOM Grodno project site was further ensured.

Biddings for the procurement of hygiene kits (toilet paper, shampoo, wet wipes, toothpaste, etc.) and food items (pasta, bottled water, biscuits, nuts, fruit puree, milk for children, etc.) for migrants at the logistics centre were completed by the BRC. The vendors signed the agreements and delivery is expected to start on 4 March 2022.

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