

## HIGHLIGHTS

**Over 500 people** are accommodated at the logistics facility.

**26 people** at the logistics centre were registered for AVRR.

**47 people** departed Belarus for their countries of origin.



Migrants at the logistics facility near the Belarus-Poland border © IOM 2021/ Olga Borzenkova

## SITUATION OVERVIEW

Over 500 migrants are still accommodated at the logistics centre in the vicinity of the border crossing point Bruzgi at the Belarus-Poland border, and continue to have access to basic emergency assistance, food and non-food items (NFIs), and counselling on Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR).

As in December 2021 IOM Belarus established a project site in Grodno city, close to the border area, it is now easier to maintain regular contact with migrants accommodated at the logistics facility and provide the opportunity to safely return home to those who have voluntarily decided to do so. Between 31 December 2021 and 6 January 2022, 26 people at the facility were registered to further benefit from the AVRR programme. On 7 January, they will be transported from the logistics facility to a hotel near Minsk airport to receive pre-departure assistance.

IOM's AVRR programme is available not only for people accommodated at the logistics centre but also to other vulnerable migrants. During the reporting period, two

migrants either approached IOM on their own or were referred to IOM for AVRR assistance by state authorities.

IOM continues its weekly visits to the facility to deliver humanitarian assistance, based on the results of available needs assessments, and on the analysis of demand for food and NFIs already delivered.

During the visit on 5 January, IOM distributed 332.2 kg of bread and fruit, 50 kg of toilet soap and 50L of liquid soap.

## NEEDS OVERVIEW

The priority needs have not changed fundamentally over the course of the past week. Humanitarian actors continue to provide humanitarian assistance to migrants stranded in Belarus, both at the border and in urban areas, while at the same time providing viable alternative solutions, including voluntary return to the country of origin and reintegration there.

Currently, needs assessments are happening sporadically during visits to the border – through communication with the Belarusian Red Cross (BRC) and migrants themselves.

## CONTACTS

The assessments so far, while not comprehensive, have highlighted urgent needs related to safe shelter, adequate health services, improved sanitary conditions, balanced nutrition, and mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), including educational and recreational activities for children. This corresponds to IOM's observations while delivering assistance.

Nevertheless, there remains the need for a more comprehensive needs assessment. In this regard, IOM's multi-disciplinary needs assessment was launched.

## CURRENT RESPONSE ACTIVITIES

IOM, in partnership with BRC, continues to deliver humanitarian aid including food and NFIs to migrants at the Bruzgi logistics centre as well as to migrants accommodated at a hotel near Minsk airport and awaiting departures to their countries of origin on a regular basis. In addition, IOM provides migrants an opportunity to return to their countries of origin in a safe and dignified way through its AVRR programme.

### HUMANITARIAN AID

During the reporting period, IOM continued supporting migrants stranded at the Belarus-Poland border. On 5 January, 210 kg of fresh bread, 67.5 kg of apples, 54.7 kg of bananas, 50L of liquid soap and 50 kg of toilet soap were delivered and distributed among the migrants.



Migrants receiving food assistance delivered by IOM © IOM 2022 / Volha Chabrouskaya

Furthermore, IOM continued providing hot meals for migrants accommodated at the hotel and awaiting their departure within AVRR programme. Additionally, clothing items (shoes, jackets, etc.), medicines, and MHPSS services were also provided to the migrants before their departure.

IOM's multi-disciplinary needs assessment was launched. The aim of the assessment is to understand the most vital needs of the migrants – those stranded at the border, as well as urban migrants – in food items and NFIs, sheltering, and access to basic services like medicine, etc.

A meeting with Grodno regional authorities to discuss possibilities of IOM's input in the improvement of sheltering conditions for the migrants at the border was held on 30 December. A number of possible options were discussed and are being further studied.

### ASSISTED VOLUNTARY RETURN AND REINTEGRATION (AVRR)



IOM representatives registering a migrant into the AVRR programme © IOM 2021/ Olga Borzenkova

IOM offers AVRR support to migrants to return safely to their countries of origin, as it is one of the few viable support options for migrants wishing to benefit from this opportunity in light of the current impossibility to move onward. During the reporting period, 28 people benefited from the AVRR programme. Among them, 26 people were registered at the logistics facility and will be transported to Minsk on 7 January, and 2 people either approached IOM Belarus themselves or were referred by state authorities. For the people staying at the hotel and awaiting departure, medicines and clothes (2 warm jackets and 2 pairs of boots for children) were provided.

IOM continues to provide its AVRR services (outreach, counseling, and registration) at Minsk airport every day. Between 31 December 2021 and 6 January 2022, a total of 47 people (all Iraqi nationals) departed with IOM support via commercial flights. Pre-embarkation medical checks and PCR testing were conducted to ensure their safe travel.



Migrants at Minsk airport before departure to their country of origin © IOM 2021 / Olga Borzenkova



## HEALTH ASSISTANCE

Pre-departure embarkation (PEC) for all applicants scheduled for the movements is conducted by IOM Minsk Medical Health (MH) unit to assess the condition of the migrants. COVID-19 testing is done by the subcontracted laboratory within 24 hours prior departure.

On 5 January, PECs for 47 applicants were conducted and all migrants were found fit to travel.

Pre-departure assistance at the airport was also provided for all. All migrants departing under the AVR program from Minsk are equipped with travel kits observing COVID-19 requirements. These kits include medical masks, sanitizers, and tissues.

## COOPERATION WITH NGOS

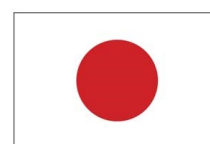
In order to ensure access of migrants in vulnerable situations to humanitarian assistance and alternative solutions, including voluntary return to the country of origin, while respecting the human rights and fundamental freedoms of migrants, IOM is rolling out its partnership with civil society organizations that have significant experience in working with migrants.

Two agreements with partner organisations “Belarusian Movement of Medical Workers” (BMMW) and “Belarusian Red Cross” were concluded with the aim to build a partnership on a number of issues to ensure effective and targeted response and viable solutions for the migrants stranded in Belarus. These partner organisations will provide assistance in AVR counselling, delivery of food and NFI, capacity building of the local staff, including referrals to the IOM protection mechanisms.



IOM delivering humanitarian assistance which is further distributed among migrants © IOM 2021/ Hanna Kalichava

### IOM ACTIVITIES ARE SUPPORTED BY:



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