

EMERGENCY RESPONSE TO COVID-19 in Mixed Migration Context in Bosnia and Herzegovina

SITUATION REPORT #30 / 12 October 2020

Reporting Period: 05 - 12/10 2020

http://drc.ba/covid19_resources

WEEKLY UPDATES:	HIGHLIGHTS
<p>26 PoCs exhibiting symptoms and isolated in reception facilities</p> <p>825 PoCs screened in reception facilities</p> <p>19 new PoCs tested for COVID-19</p> <p>CUMULATIVE:</p> <p>24 PoCs positive for COVID-19</p> <p>51,009 COVID-19 screenings in reception facilities</p> <p>319 PoCs tested for COVID-19</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30,509 cases of COVID-19 confirmed in BiH, 915 deaths and 23,300 recovered patients.¹ • Three additional cases of COVID-19 confirmed, 1 in temporary reception center (TRC) Blazuj and 2 in TRC Sedra. • 26 PoCs exhibiting COVID-19-like symptoms monitored by PHC and DRC medical teams: 1 in TRC Miral, 7 in TRC Sedra, 1 in ETC Lipa and 17 in TRC Usivak. • 5 PoCs with confirmed COVID-19 isolated in centers, 4 in RRC Salakovac and 1 in TRC Sedra. • 25 new PoCs exhibiting COVID-19-like symptoms (5 in TRC Borici, 14 in TRC Sedra, 1 in TRC Miral, 1 in ETC Lipa and 4 in TRC Blazuj) referred to symptomatic isolation in reception facilities. • 74 PoCs referred to preventive isolation in reception facilities. • 825 PoCs screened for COVID-19 symptoms: 715 new arrivals to temporary reception facilities in BiH during the reporting week and 110 PoCs screened preventively through “blanket screenings” realized in RRC Salakovac due to identified symptomatic cases. • 63 PoCs monitored in preventive isolation by DRC Medical Officers (3 in TRC Miral, 29 in TRC Sedra, 27 in TRC Borici and 4 in ETC Lipa). • 19 PoCs tested for COVID-19 (1 in TRC Borici, 9 in TRC Sedra, 3 in TRC Blazuj, 1 in TRC Lipa and 5 in RRC Salakovac). • Out of 5 PoCs tested in RRC Salakovac on October 9, 4 were retests for PoCs with previously confirmed COVID-19; results were confirmed negative. The second retest

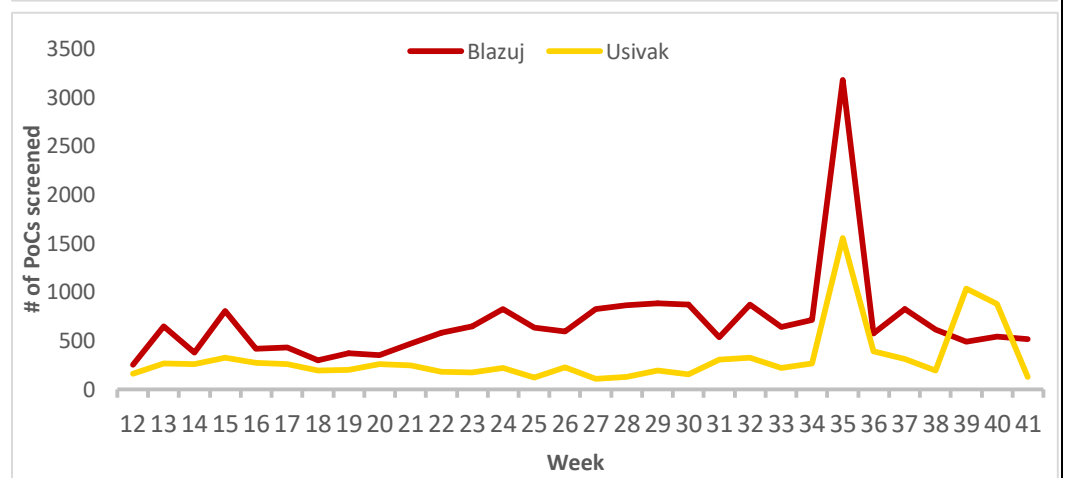
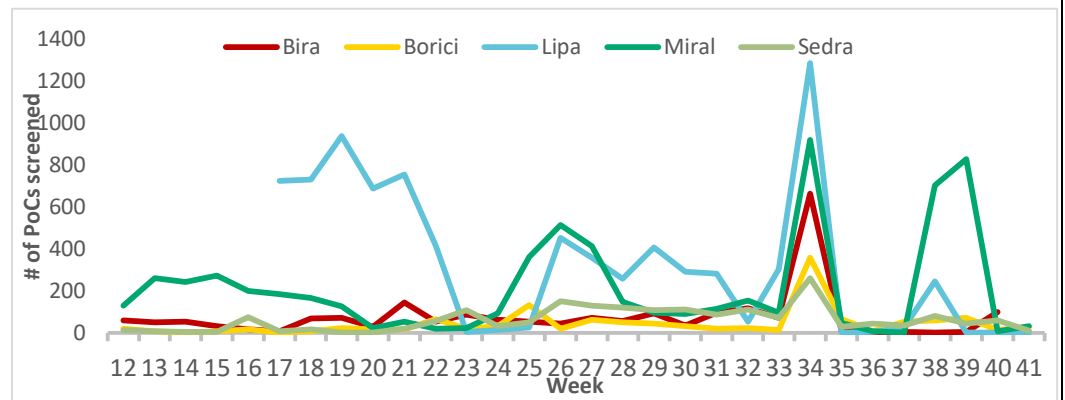
¹ Official statistics imported from Public Health Institute FBiH (<https://covid-19.ba/>) and RS (<https://www.phi.rs.ba/index.php?view=clanak&id=1305&lang=SR-CIR>)

is scheduled for Monday, 12 October. Should the second result be negative, the self-isolation will be lifted.

- One **PoC, beneficiary of ETC Lipa, passed away on October 7, immediately after reporting to the ETC medical unit.** The PoC was tested post-mortem for COVID-19. Result was confirmed to be negative.

KEY DEVELOPMENTS AND CHALLENGES

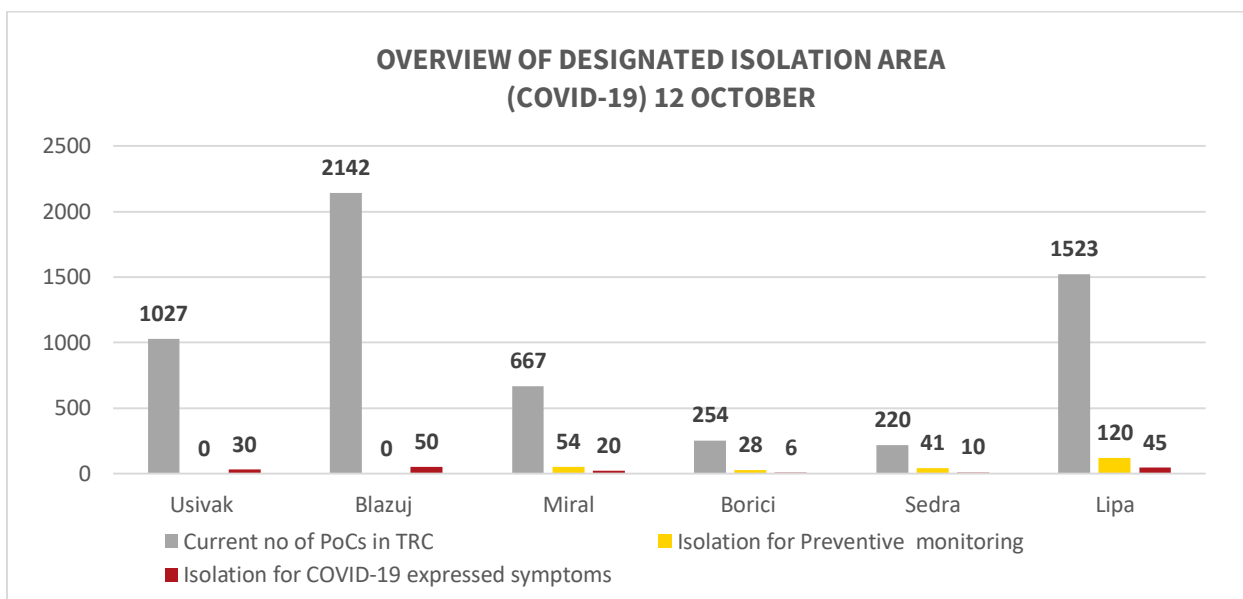
- Out of three new cases of COVID-19, one (referred for testing upon arrival in TRC Blazuj) was admitted to Podhrastovi isolation unit (Sarajevo) and one, previously accommodated in TRC Sedra symptomatic isolation, was admitted to the Cantonal Hospital, Bihac. The other positive case from TRC Sedra is still accommodated in TRC Sedra symptomatic isolation. Test results became available on 7 and 10 October (TRC Sedra) and 8 October (TRC Blazuj).



- At the moment, **a total of 3 PoCs positive for COVID-19 are hospitalized**, all expressing moderate symptoms. 12 PoCs were discharged from Bihac Cantonal Hospital, infectious disease department, and 1 from UCC Tuzla.
- **A total of 67 PoCs were discharged from preventive and 58 PoCs from symptomatic isolation.** In the same period, 15 PoCs left preventive isolation on their own and 1 PoC left symptomatic isolation.
- **Blanket screening of all population (110) accommodated in RRC Salakovac** was performed last week.
- **Outreach response:**
 - PoCs in out-of-site locations are provided with medical assistance by DRC and RC teams, visiting the sites occasionally. The assistance provided is urgent and first-aid response, which can only partially mitigate the risk of growing health complexities coupled with exposure to dire weather conditions.
 - There is no feasible solution to prevent the outbreak of COVID-19 infection in out-of-site locations. With no WASH facilities in place and no hygiene items available, nor PPE worn by PoCs, it is impossible to keep the situation under control.

OPERATIONAL PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

- **COVID-19 Response in TRCs in BiH:**
 - At the moment, a total of **243 beds** in TRCs/ETC in USC are available for preventive and a total of **161** beds for POCs expressing COVID-19 symptoms. In order to accommodate all PoCs in need, TRC Sedra has slightly increased temporary preventive isolation, since the number of PoCs in preventive isolation exceeded initially designated capacities.
 - In Sarajevo Canton, as per recommendation of the Institute of Public Health FBiH, only symptomatic isolation premises are still in use. A total of **80** beds, **30** in TRC Usivak and **50** in TRC Blazuj, are available for isolation of PoCs exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms. Despite another positive case being identified among the refugee/migrant population in Sarajevo Canton, no preventive isolation has been resumed yet, mostly due to the need for increased accommodation capacities and impossibility to organize transfers to other locations.



- **Measures related to humanitarian staff:**

- IOM and DRC continue implementing obligatory screening for all staff arriving for duty, including measuring of body temperature and identifying other possible symptoms of COVID-19.
- **Humanitarian staff working in the reception centers should continuously self-monitor².** In case humanitarian staff have been in contact with persons confirmed positive for COVID-19, they should inform their health provider and follow the suggested measures. **Staff exhibiting COVID-19 like symptoms, including fever, should suspend their presence from the reception centers until fully recovered.**
- **Specifically, the following measures are to be adhered to by humanitarian staff:**

During contact with PoCs:

- wearing a mask and gloves is mandatory
- if not possible to keep social distance (1,5m), mandatory to wear a face-shield
- practice personal hygiene as much as possible, especially before/after wearing/removing PPE (hand washing and/or disinfection, coughing and sneezing inside mask or elbow)

During contacts with colleagues and other service providers:

- wearing a mask during all working hours is mandatory
- wearing gloves while inside the TRC/ERC is mandatory
- keeping social distance at all times, especially during break (smoking, eating)

² The Federal Institute for Public Health has made available the online self-assessment test on COVID-19, available at <https://www.zzjzfbih.ba/covid-19/>

- NO TOUCH POLICY - handshaking, hugging, kissing or other form of touching should be avoided
- practice personal hygiene as much as possible

MEASURES ANNOUNCED BY BIH AUTHORITIES

Recommendations regarding capacities of isolation premises in Temporary Reception Centres in Una-Sana Canton were issued by Crisis Headquarters of the Ministry of Health, Labor and Social Policy of the Una-Sana Canton on October 07.

Following the field visit performed to the TRCs by MoHLSP USC, the Crisis Board of MoHLSP issued recommendations for IOM, in cooperation with DRC and other partner organizations operating TRCs in USC, to adjust the capacities of isolation premises with sanitary facilities separated from the rest of the accommodation capacities, in which migrants and asylum seekers with suspected or symptomatic COVID 19 could be relocated.

- In TRC Sedra, to ensure the establishment of isolation premises in the following way:
 - Preventive isolation – 41 beds; Symptomatic isolation – 10 beds; It is ordered to place an additional container in front of the bungalow complex, in which examinations of beneficiaries with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 will be performed. In case of disease of a large number of beneficiaries of this TRC, to stop providing other services within the bungalow complex and convert them into isolation premises;
- In TRC Borići, to ensure the establishment of isolation premises in the following way:
 - Preventive isolation – 28 beds; to provide premises on the second floor of the building TRC Borići; Symptomatic isolation – 6 beds; In case of disease of a large number of beneficiaries of this TRC, it is recommended to provide additional containers and place them in already provided places within the reception center, simultaneously ensuring preventive and symptomatic isolation, but also separation from the rest of the population of this TRC;
- The incidence of disease within the population of migrants and asylum seekers will be monitored by the Public Health Institute of Una-Sana Canton and Crisis Committee of the Ministry of Health, Labor and Social Policy of the Una-Sana Canton, based on DRC reporting – accordingly, it will be proposed to expand or reduce the space for isolation of cases with suspected or symptomatic COVID 19.

Orders and guidelines issued by the Crisis Board of MoHLSP USC regarding the treatment of beneficiaries accommodated in the TRCS in the Una-Sana Canton in case of COVID-19 suspected or infected cases, remain in force.
- On issuance of recommendations, DRC addressed MoHLSP and CCCM Borici to consider placing a total of 10 containers (8 for accommodation and 2 sanitary) for establishment of additional preventive and symptomatic premises outside of the building of TRC Borici, due to the current increased risks for spread of diseases if preventive isolation is placed within the building premises, densely populated by families with children and UASCs.

MEDIA REPORTING

1. More than 300 new coronavirus cases reported in Bosnia and Herzegovina

More than 300 people have tested positive for the coronavirus in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the past 24 hours, healthcare institutions reported on Sunday. No COVID-19 fatalities were reported in FBiH, while one person died due to COVID-19 in the RS.

<http://ba.n1info.com/English/NEWS/a477650/More-than-300-new-coronavirus-cases-reported-in-Bosnia-and-Herzegovina.html>

2. Handover of medical equipment, KCUS gets three ventilators

The Health Insurance Institute of the Sarajevo Canton (SC) provided medical equipment worth 718.110 KM (including VAT) through the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), in accordance with the Decision of the Government of SC.

<https://fena.ba/article/1176866/handover-of-medical-equipment-kcus-gets-three-ventilators>

3. NATO is raising 500,000 Euros for Bosnia and Herzegovina's Fight against COVID 19

NATO is raising 500,000 euros for Bosnia and Herzegovina's fight against COVID 19, the Ministry of Defense of Bosnia and Herzegovina said in a press release. Representatives of the Mission of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Headquarters in Brussels, headed by BiH Ambassador to NATO Mitar Kujundzic, are holding intensive meetings with relevant NATO representatives on the BiH Reform Program and the Planning and Audit Process (PARP).

<http://www.sarajevotimes.com/169480-2/>

4. Sarajevo General Hospital receives four new ventilators

Sarajevo General Hospital "Abdulah Nakas" received a donation of four 'Mindray' ventilators worth nearly €150,000 from the Sarajevo Canton government, the Hospital said in a statement on Tuesday.

<http://ba.n1info.com/English/NEWS/a476420/Sarajevo-General-Hospital-receives-four-new-ventilators.html>

5. Bosnians can travel to North Macedonia without negative PCR tests as of Monday

North Macedonia's Government decided to allow entry to citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Kosovo and Montenegro without the requirement to present a negative PCR test at the border as of Monday, North Macedonian Prime Minister, Zoran Zaev, wrote on social media.

<http://ba.n1info.com/English/NEWS/a476482/Bosnians-can-travel-to-North-Macedonia-without-negative-PCR-tests-as-of-Monday.html>

6. Swiss govt. donates personal protective equipment to SC Health Centers staff

Sets of personal protection equipment for medical staff were donated today to the Health Center of Sarajevo Canton by the Government of Switzerland.

“This is a significant donation of 5,500 sets for the employees of the Health Center, which will enable them to work better and safer. For now, we have enough protective equipment and we hope that it will remain so in the future,” said the general director of the Public Institution Health Center of Sarajevo Canton, Muhamed Ahmić.

He also thanked the Danish Refugee Council, which also contributed to the donation, and reminded that the CS Health Center runs infirmaries in TRCs Ušivak and Blažuj.

The donation is a continuation of Swiss support to the health needs of vulnerable categories during a pandemic.

“We are talking about women and men who work every day on the first line in health care institutions and in migrant camps. They are real heroes in this crisis and the donated equipment will reduce the risk of infecting themselves,” said the Director of the Cooperation Program at the Swiss Embassy in BiH Barbara Dätwyler Scheuer.

The Advisor to the Federal Minister of Health, Marina Bera, was present during the handover expressing gratitude to Switzerland, which has been actively engaged in the health sector improvement for 20 years.

“I am thankful to the Government of Switzerland for the continuous improvement of health care and their immediate assistance at the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic. Also, there is a great contribution of all healthcare in providing professional care event towards migrants,” said Bera.

Words of gratitude were also sent by the Secretary General of the Federal Red Cross, Namik Hodžić and the DRC Program Manager Verica Rečević, who are convinced that the donation (30.100 PPE sets) will ensure better working conditions for CS HC employees.

<https://vijesti.ba/clanak/509992/vlada-svicarske-donirala-setove-opreme-za-licnu-zastitu-osoblja-doma-zdravlja>

Stay informed – find the latest information from WHO or related sources:

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/situation-reports/>

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

<https://www.epi-win.com/>

We thank you for your responsible behavior in the interest of your own health, but also in the interest of the health of all the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina.