

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

SITUATION REPORT #46 / 22 February 2021

Reporting Period: 08 - 22/02/2021

http://drc.ba/covid19_resources

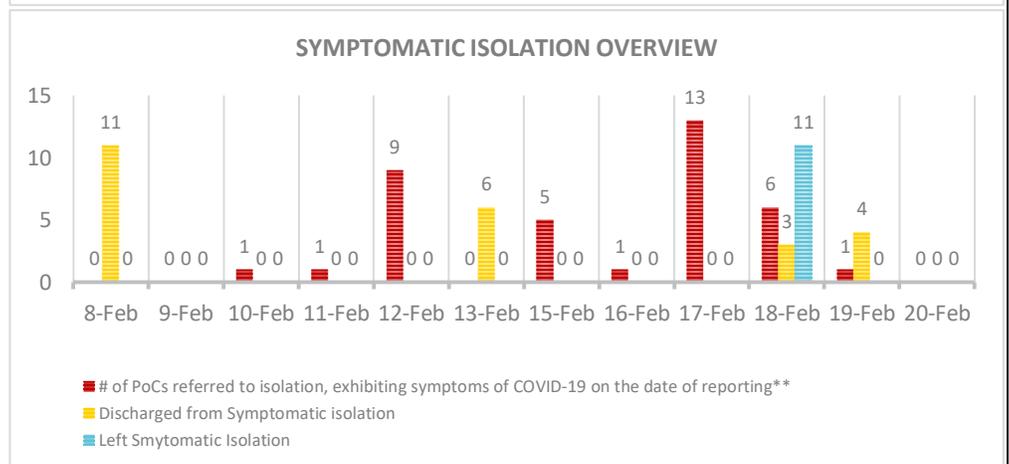
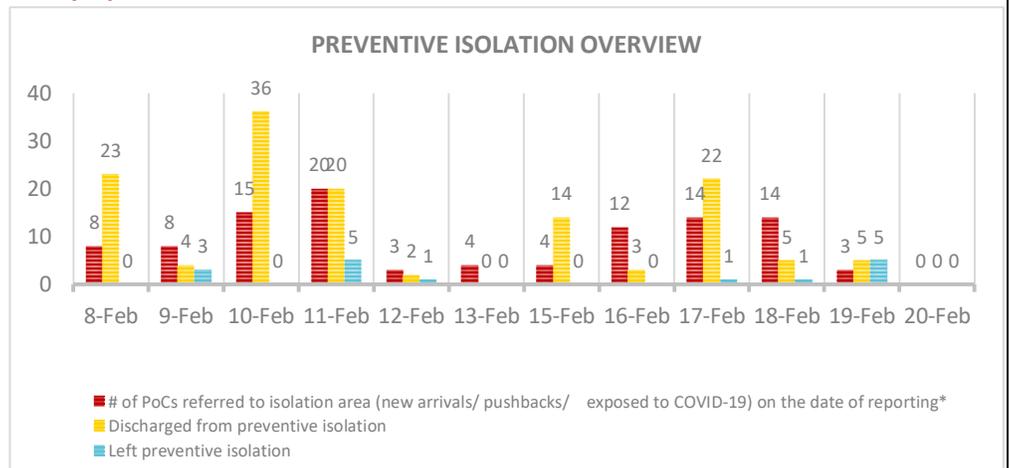
WEEKLY UPDATES:	HIGHLIGHTS
<p>12 PoCs exhibiting symptoms and isolated in reception facilities</p> <p>301 PoCs screened in reception facilities</p> <p>1 new PoC confirmed positive for COVID-19</p> <p>CUMULATIVE:</p> <p>34 PoCs positive for COVID-19</p> <p>64,024 COVID-19 screenings in reception facilities and in out-of-site locations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 128,661 cases of COVID-19 confirmed in BiH, 5,016 deaths and 112,879 recovered patients.¹ • 12 PoCs exhibiting COVID-19-like symptoms monitored by PHC and DRC medical teams in TRC Blazuj. • 1 PoC positive for COVID-19 isolated and monitored by PHC and DRC medical teams in TRC Borici. • 37 PoCs exhibiting COVID-19-like symptoms referred to symptomatic isolation in reception centers: 26 in TRC Sedra and 11 in TRC Blazuj. • 105 PoCs referred to preventive isolation in reception facilities. • 301 PoCs screened for COVID-19 symptoms: all new arrivals to temporary reception facilities in BiH during the reporting period. • 45 PoCs monitored in preventive isolation by DRC Medical Officers (9 in TRC Miral, 22 in Sedra and 14 in TRC Borici). • 30 PoCs tested for COVID-19. Out of 30, one result was confirmed positive. <p>KEY DEVELOPMENTS AND CHALLENGES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Public Health institute of Bosnia and Herzegovina has confirmed that the new variants of SARS-CoV-2 has been detected in the general population, confirming that these variants are more contagious. • Due to the increased number of positive cases among service providers, as well lower compliance with infection prevention and control measures (also by the general population), it is quite challenging to track contacts in order to prevent the

¹ Official statistics for [Federation of BiH](#), [Republika Srpska](#) and [Brcko District](#)

447 PoCs tested for COVID-19

spread of SARS-CoV-2 among PoCs. It is very important that all service providers act responsibly and follow all the recommendations issued by the Federal and Cantonal Public Health Institute.

- Due to improved weather conditions, movement of PoCs has increased, making it challenging to establish preventive isolation measures. This has been overcome with additional testing of the PoCs in preventive isolation, on a case by case basis.
- A total of 134 PoCs were discharged from preventive isolation in all TRCs in BiH, and 24 PoCs from symptomatic isolation, on expiry of the isolation and monitoring period. In the same period, **16 PoCs left preventive isolation on their own and 11 left symptomatic isolation.**



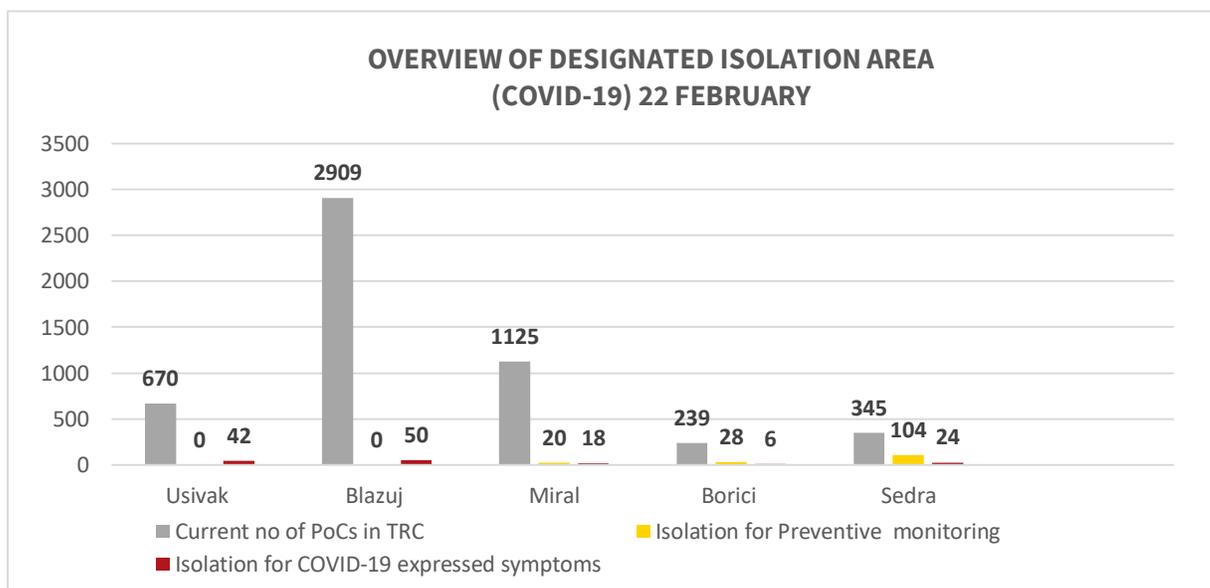
- **Outreach response:**
 - PoCs in out-of-site locations are provided with medical assistance by DRC and RC teams visiting the sites, delivering First Aid and performing medical screening of PoCs for COVID-19 symptoms.

- Due to improved weather conditions, the number of PoCs at informal settlements is slightly increasing. DRC outreach teams are performing more COVID-19 symptoms screenings, delivering health educational sessions regarding COVID19 preventive measures, as well as referring and reporting any suspect cases to health authorities.

OPERATIONAL PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

- **COVID-19 Response in TRCs in BiH:**

- A total of **152 beds** in TRCs in USC are available for preventive isolation and a total of **140 beds** for POCs with COVID-19 symptoms.



- **Coordination with authorities and health actors:**

- A bilateral meeting was held between DRC and Service for Foreigners Affairs (SFA) to develop a referral pathway for testing of PoCs, prior to accommodation inside immigration center Lukavica. It was agreed that the draft of the protocol, developed by DRC in line with PHI USC recommendations, will be shared with SFA for revision. All relevant actors will need to be engaged in developing and establishing a contingency plan in case one of the PoCs is tested positive.

- **Measures related to humanitarian staff:**

- **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**

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/>

symptoms, including fever, should suspend their presence from the reception centers until fully recovered. Additionally, information should be shared with DRC medical teams, to ensure contact tracing and mitigating the risk of spread of COVID-19 infection.

MEASURES ANNOUNCED BY BIH AUTHORITIES

The Federal Ministry of Health issued a press release on 11th of January, confirming all previous orders are still in place, following the Decision of the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina related to the Order of the Crisis Staff of the Federal Ministry of Health which restricts movement in the Federation of BiH from 11 pm to 5 am, as well as mandatory wearing of protective masks.

<https://covid19.fmoh.gov.ba/novost/62/naredbe-kriznog-stozera-staba-federalnog-ministarstva-zdravstva>

The Federal Government has updated a plan of immunization against COVID19:

http://www.fbihvlada.gov.ba/bosanski/aktuelno_v2.php?akt_id=9102

Ministry of Health of Sarajevo Canton has announced the opening of “Drive through testing for COVID19”:

<https://vlada.ks.gov.ba/aktuelnosti/novosti-vezane-za-koronu-virus/kanton-sarajevo-od-danas-poceo-saradom-prvi-punkt>

Ministry of Health of Sarajevo Canton has announced the implementation of new COVID19 referral and treatment protocol:

<https://vlada.ks.gov.ba/aktuelnosti/novosti-vezane-za-koronu-virus/jasan-put-pacijenta-od-doma-zdravlja-dobolnice>

MEDIA REPORTING

1. Bosnia reports 341 new coronavirus cases and 9 fatalities

Bosnian health officials reported 341 new Covid-19 cases on Monday, along with 9 virus-related fatalities.

<https://ba.n1info.com/vijesti/novi-podaci-za-bih-koronom-zarazeno-jos-341-preminulo-9/>

2. World Bank approves €56 mn loan to Bosnia for pandemic support

The World Bank (WB) has approved a €56 million loan for Bosnia and Herzegovina as support to small and medium-sized enterprises affected by the coronavirus pandemic.

[World Bank approves €56 million loan to Bosnia for pandemic support - N1 \(n1info.com\)](#)

3. Čerkez: We have increase in the number of infected in the last two weeks

The FBiH Assistant Minister of Health Goran Čerkez warned citizens to adhere to the Covid pandemic restriction measures and pointed out that the number of infected has increased in the last two weeks, especially in the Sarajevo Canton.

[Čerkez: We have increase in the number of infected in the last two weeks | FENA](#)

4. One Thousand Health Workers to be vaccinated in Republika Srpska Entity

The first doses of the Russian vaccine “Sputnik V”, which Republika Srpska ordered for the vaccination of a thousand health workers, were cleared earlier and taken from the Sarajevo Airport, confirmed for BHRT the spokesman of the Indirect Taxation Authority of BiH, Ratko Kovacevic. The vaccines were in the customs warehouse at the Sarajevo airport for five days, and today the customs procedure was finally completed.

[One Thousand Health Workers to be vaccinated in Republika Srpska Entity - Sarajevo Times](#)

5. British coronavirus strain discovered in Bosnia and Herzegovina

The British coronavirus strain has been discovered in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Federation Entity’s Crisis Staff said Tuesday.

[British coronavirus strain discovered in Bosnia and Herzegovina - N1 \(n1info.com\)](#)

6. First confirmed UK COVID strain in Bosnia brought by foreigner, lab chief says

The so-called UK coronavirus strain was first discovered in Bosnia and Herzegovina in a foreigner who recently visited the country as a tourist, according to a lab chief at the Sarajevo Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, where the new virus variant was detected.

[First confirmed UK COVID strain in Bosnia brought by foreigner, lab chief says - N1 \(n1info.com\)](#)

7. Čerkez: It is estimated that about 30 percent of BiH citizens have contracted Covid-19

FBiH Assistant Minister of Health Goran Čerkez said today that a study conducted in November 2020 showed that 19.2 percent of BiH citizens have contracted COVID-19, and it is estimated that now that number is between 25 and 30 percent.

[Čerkez: It is estimated that about 30 percent of BiH citizens have contracted Covid-19 - FENA.NEWS](#)

8. Bosnia's RS entity to start vaccination against Covid-19 on Friday

The CEO of the University Clinical Centre in Banja Luka Vlado Djajic confirmed for N1 Wednesday that this hospital would begin vaccinating patients against Covid-19 with the Russian Sputnik V vaccine on Friday, at 11 a.m

[Bosnia's RS entity to start vaccination against Covid-19 on Friday - N1 \(n1info.com\)](#)

9. Federation of BiH will get the first 16,000 Doses of Vaccines in Eight Days

The first vaccines against coronavirus should arrive in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH) next Wednesday, on February 17th.

These are vaccines manufactured by Pfizer, which were developed in cooperation with the German BioNTech, and the news was confirmed by a source close to the Government of FBiH, [Klix.ba](#) writes.

[Federation of BiH will get the first 16,000 Doses of Vaccines in Eight Days - Sarajevo Times](#)

10. Dr Andrej Trampuz: BiH should introduce stricter measures to prevent third wave

Relaxing the measures introduced to prevent the spread of the coronavirus in Bosnia is “certainly a mistake” at this time, Dr. Andrej Trampuz, Head of Infectiology and Septic Surgery at Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin, one of Europe's largest university hospitals, told N1, arguing that even stricter measures should be introduced until the country vaccinates enough of its population.

[Dr Andrej Trampuz: BiH should introduce stricter measures to prevent third wave - N1 \(n1info.com\)](#)

11. Sarajevo Canton to set up coronavirus drive-in testing checkpoint

A drive-in testing checkpoint for coronavirus will start collecting samples on Wednesday, the Government of the Sarajevo Canton (KS) announced Tuesday. Patient testing will be performed only with the e-referral sent by the family doctor. The checkpoint's working hours will be from 8 am to 2:30 pm every day, including weekends.

[Sarajevo Canton to set up coronavirus drive-in testing checkpoint - N1 \(n1info.com\)](#)

12. Verica Rečević, DRC Program Manager about health care for people on the move

[Zdravstvena zaštita lica u pokretu - YouTube](#)

13. EU announces bio-defense plan against Covid-19 variants

In a statement the European Commission said the HERA Incubator will “bring together researchers, biotech companies, manufacturers, regulators and public authorities to monitor variants, exchange data and cooperate on adapting vaccines.”

The core function of the HERA Incubator will be to “boost preparedness, develop vaccines for the variants and increase industrial production.” It will receive €75 million in funding to develop specialized tests for new variants, and to support genomic sequencing across the EU.

In addition, a clinical trial network which brings together 16 EU member states and five other countries including Switzerland and Israel will be created to exchange data and findings from trials.

[EU announces bio-defense plan against Covid-19 variants - N1 \(n1info.com\)](#)

14. Musa: Incidence of disease in FBiH lower, but increased number of new cases in Sarajevo Canton

On behalf of the FBiH Ministry of Health, epidemiologist Sanjin Musa said that the incidence of COVID-19 in FBiH is four to five times lower than during the peak of the pandemic in November last year, but that current indicators show an increase in the number of new infections in the Sarajevo Canton which still requires compliance with epidemiological measures.

The conclusion is that the measures from November gave results, if you look at the overall picture in FBiH, said Musa and reminded that the authorities have been working on the vaccination plan since August 2020 and prepared the first version of the plan in December that year.

[Musa: Incidence of disease in FBiH lower, but increased number of new cases in Sarajevo Canton - FENA.NEWS](#)

15. EU launches project to support Western Balkans vaccination effort

The European Commission said on Friday that a new European Union project has been launched to support vaccination efforts in the Western Balkans.

“The European Union in partnership with the World Health Organisation (WHO) has launched a new regional project worth over Seven million Euro to support safe and effective vaccination of the populations across the Western Balkans,” a press release said. It added that the project will help prepare the region for the effective reception and administration of COVID-19 vaccines, including those received from COVAX and through the EU vaccine sharing mechanism with EU Member States. *“It will also help improve the region’s resilience against health emergencies, and support it in moving towards sustainable funding for universal health care,”* it said.

[EU launches project to support Western Balkans vaccination effort - N1 \(n1info.com\)](#)

16. Emergency Session of Cantonal Government after worsened Epidemiological Situation

The Prime Minister of the Sarajevo Canton, Edin Forto, announced an emergency session of the Cantonal Government for today, due to the growing number of infected people and *“obvious non-compliance with the measures of a large number of Canton citizens”*.

“The pandemic is not over. Our fellow citizens are dying. BiH and the Federation of BiH are silent about vaccination. With all efforts, the Sarajevo Canton has not yet managed to get vaccines on the market “, stated Forto on his Twitter account.

The number of newly infected with coronavirus is rising. At least 402 new cases of the infection have been reported since Friday. 17 people passed away. In Canton Sarajevo (CS), out of 713 people tested, 147 of them were coronavirus positive. Epidemiologists warn that mitigation of the restrictions is one of the main reasons for the worsening of the epidemiological situation.

[Emergency Session of Cantonal Government after worsened Epidemiological Situation - Sarajevo Times](#)

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.