

MIGRATION HEALTH ANNUAL REPORT 2023



Most of the visitors to the IOM mobile clinics in Ukraine are the elderly – displaced and locals – whose health was affected by age and the war. IOM brings medical services closer to the most vulnerable. © IOM

Explore our annual report for 2023, spotlighting efforts in:

- Health aspects of border management in Central Asia
- Health assessments in the context of resettlement and relocation of refugees and migrants
- Emergency health response in Ukraine, Republic of Moldova, Türkiye, Armenia, and Central Asia
- Addressing key health issues such as HIV in Uzbekistan, communicable diseases in Belarus, and environment and health in Kyrgyzstan
- Vaccination confidence, demand, and coverage among Ukrainian refugees
- Health assistance for irregular migrants in the Western Balkans



Hasan received medical assistance from IOM Moldova through the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) programme.

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"I entered Moldova from Kherson, Ukraine. My leg was injured by a rocket explosion. My eyesight has also been affected. I was not in good health. I heard about the help you offer from a friend of mine who was helped by IOM Moldova and arrived safely in Azerbaijan. This is why I asked IOM Moldova for help. I will go home tomorrow and start medical treatment."

—Hasan, from Azerbaijan

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Way Forward to 2024

FOREWORD

In the face of unprecedented challenges, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) remains steadfast in its commitment to safeguarding the health and well-being of migrants, refugees and communities alike. As we navigate the complex landscape of migration, health emergencies, and regional dynamics, our missions in South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe, and Central Asia provide critical support.

In responding to emergency health needs of earthquake-affected populations in Türkiye and for displaced populations in Armenia, amid the ongoing crisis in Ukraine and neighbouring countries, and the plight of displaced Afghans in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, our emergency health response efforts have been paramount. Recognizing the urgent need for comprehensive health-care services, our teams have worked tirelessly to ensure that those affected by displacement, conflict, and crisis receive the care they require.

In 2023, we have persisted in ensuring that health needs of returning migrants are met and we have been delivering essential health-care services to irregular migrants in the Western Balkans. We have redoubled our efforts to support HIV prevention among migrants and their families in Uzbekistan. Additionally, our teams have diligently analyzed communicable disease dynamics in Belarus, thereby contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the health challenges encountered by migrants in the region.

Thousands of migrants and refugees have been able to embark on their journeys safely and in good health after undergoing thorough health assessments by our teams, such as in Belarus and Kazakhstan. Furthermore, we have remained dedicated to our work on COVID-19 response and border health, while also focusing on increasing vaccine confidence and demand.

Through strategic partnerships and coordinated action, we continue to mitigate the impact of emergencies on vulnerable populations, emphasizing the principles of inclusivity, dignity, and resilience. Our collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) and other key stakeholders underscores our shared commitment to enhancing the accessibility of healthcare for migrants. Through policy advocacy, capacity-building initiatives, and knowledge-sharing platforms, we strive to address systemic barriers and promote equitable health outcomes for all. By fostering dialogue and cooperation at the regional and global levels, we aim to catalyze positive change and advance the rights of migrants as integral members of society.

As we look to the future, new challenges and opportunities emerge, including addressing the health impacts of climate change. By addressing root causes, strengthening health systems, and promoting sustainable development, we can make migration safer and migrants healthier while simultaneously enhancing the resilience of communities. Through innovations, evidence-based interventions, facilitation of regional collaboration, and migration route-based approach, we remain committed in our pursuit of a healthier, more equitable future for all.

In closing, we extend our deepest gratitude to our dedicated staff, partners, donors and stakeholders for their unwavering commitment and tireless efforts. Together, we will continue to forge ahead, guided by our shared vision of a world where migration is safe, dignified, and conducive to the well-being of all.

Migration Health Division (MHD) in the Regional Office for
South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe, and Central Asia
(SEEECA)

Migration Health 2023 in numbers

in South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia



USD 28+ million*

Invested in



55 projects

Note: Estimation and includes health assessments in some non-SEEECA countries

Major Donors

The United States of America

Canada

Norway

Germany

France

The United Kingdom

European Union

Main Indicators:



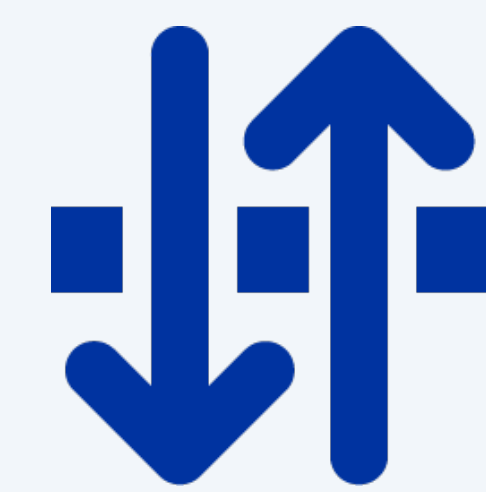
429

IOM supported health facilities



56

Mobile medical teams in crisis contexts



62

Points of entry supported



273,284

Primary health-care consultations



36,126

Specialised medical consultations



9,894

Referrals for care



35,218

Health Assessments



11,469

Vaccine doses administered



461

Medical escorts assigned to refugees for travel



5,150

Health workers trained



1,321

Health awareness sessions



270

Community engagement activities

Migration Health team 2023 Highlights

FEBRUARY

Conducted a monitoring visit to IOM Moldova together with the Emergency Health Officer from Headquarters

Participated at the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA)-UNHCR-IOM Tripartite meeting on resettlement in Geneva, Switzerland

APRIL

Delivered sessions at the Roundtable and training “Introduction to Migration and Health” in Minsk, Belarus

JUNE

Delivered a speech on safeguarding migrants' and communities' health at the Astana International Forum, Kazakhstan

Presented on “Access to COVID-19 vaccination for migrants and increasing vaccine confidence” at the South-Eastern European Health Network Meeting in Tirana, Albania

Delivered sessions at the Project Development Training for IOM Ukraine staff in Vienna

SEPTEMBER

Attended the European Health Forum Gastein, Bad Hofgastein, Austria

NOVEMBER

Delivered a speech at the Roundtable “Health-driven migration from Georgia to Europe and the Schengen Area” at the International Conference “Migration from Georgia to Europe and the Schengen Area – Multi-sectoral Cooperation to Counter Irregular Migration, Migration-Related Crime and to Better Regulate Health-Driven Migration” in Tbilisi, Georgia

Presented on “Communicating on Emergency Health and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS)” at the Public Information Workshop for IOM Türkiye in Vienna

Delivered parts of the training “Awareness raising on HIV for migrants and their partners” in Tashkent, Uzbekistan

MARCH

Participated at the Asian Development Bank's (ADB) bi-annual meeting on the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) strategy for Health and engaged on possible joint projects.

MAY

Facilitated sessions at the second Regional Dialogue on Health Security through Improving Cross-border Cooperation and Communication in Dushanbe, Tajikistan

JULY

Organized a joint call with WHO and IOM Ukraine to discuss HIV and tuberculosis care in Ukraine since the start of the war

AUGUST

UNFPA, IOM and UNAIDS co-organized an online regional stakeholder consultation for a project on migration, HIV and sexual and reproductive health, attended by over 50 participants from various organizations from Central Asia

OCTOBER

Held an opening speech and gave an interview at Dialogue on Returned Tajik Migrants: Health and Reintegration issues in Dushanbe, Tajikistan

Organized the Regional Chief Migration Health Officer Training in Warsaw, Poland

DECEMBER

Led discussions at the kick-off meeting of the EU project “Improving access to healthcare for refugees and people displaced from Ukraine benefitting of temporary protection in Member States”, jointly supported by IOM and WHO

Border Health

The COVID-19 pandemic has served as a reminder that new infectious diseases may emerge and lead to devastating consequences. It revealed many challenges that need to be addressed, including strengthening cross-border collaboration for an effective multi-national response to control the spread of communicable diseases across the region.

On 5 May 2023, the World Health Organization (WHO) announced that COVID-19 no longer constitutes a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC), but has transitioned into an established and ongoing health issue, officially entering the phase of long-term management. Building on the momentum established since 2020, it is the time to invest in and sustain the gains made during the pandemic response, and to apply the lessons learned from this pandemic and other health emergencies. This is the way to enhance the resilience of our health systems against future shocks.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (US CDC) in Atlanta, and the CDC and IOM country missions in Central Asia (CA) collaborated to implement the first regional border health project in Central Asian countries, involving Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. The project aimed to enhance the capacity challenges at points of entry (PoE) and border health management in accordance with the International Health Regulations (IHR 2005) and the Global Health and Security Agenda (GHS). Since April 2021, IOM and CDC have been facilitating several activities, including the formation of multisectoral teams on border health, conducting

need assessments at the PoE, organizing training on emergency health response at the border for health and non-health staff at the PoE, institutionalizing training materials in the relevant training institutions for the health and non-health workers, strengthening multisectoral partnership for enhancing health security at the border and facilitating regional discussion on cross-border control of infectious diseases.

In 2023, IOM continued to collaborate with the CDC to enhance cross-border coordination and communication amongst CA countries in line with the IHR through technical support and assisting in resource mobilization.



Regional Workshop “Regional Dialogue on Health Security Through Improving Cross-Border Cooperation and Communication”, Dushanbe, Tajikistan, 18-19 May 2023

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Tajikistan

Regional Dialogue on Health Security Through Improving Cross-Border Cooperation and Communication

Given the progress in the CA region for promoting health security at the border, IOM and CDC supported the second regional border health event “Regional Dialogue on Health Security through Improving Cross-Border Cooperation and Communication” in Dushanbe on 18-19 May 2023. The event facilitated further discussion between the participating countries and provided required technical support, and a forum for partners to share information on additional border health initiatives in CA and shared experiences from other regions. This format helped to extend networking between governmental stakeholders, technical organizations, and donors for further partnership and strengthening cross-border cooperation for health security.

In 2022, Tajikistan successfully established mobile training units (MTUs). The MTUs facilitated one-day on-the-job training on “Borders and Health” at 33 border crossing points in the country between January and February 2023. A total of 251 border guards participated in these trainings.

The sessions included educational information through mini-lectures, general discussions, and participant engagement, aiming to enhance the participants' theoretical knowledge and practical abilities, including skills such as donning and doffing personal protective equipment (PPE). The training materials and PPE were handed over to the border crossing points after the training for further use in subsequent training and practical applications.



On-the-job training on “Borders and Health” in Tajikistan © IOM



Opening of a new SQP at the Ruzvay border crossing point with Afghanistan © IOM

In March 2023, IOM, in cooperation with the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Republic of Tajikistan and the local authorities of Darvoz district, opened a new Sanitary Quarantine Point (SQP) at the Ruzvay border crossing point with Afghanistan.

“The SQP is responsible for both routine and emergency procedures, ensuring timely reporting to the appropriate health authority of cross-border related public health concerns, including health concerns identified during border crossings and public health concerns in neighbouring districts.”—Dr. Lolaev, Deputy of the state institution “Center on Sanitary and Epidemiological Expertise and Control on Transport and Border”

In line with international standards, the Ruzvay SQP (photo) has administrative and diagnostic wings with the latest medical equipment, a separate quarantine area and an area for health staff. In addition, two isolation rooms were constructed in case people were detected with suspected symptoms of communicable diseases. IOM also constructed a water tower with a capacity of ten tons to provide uninterrupted water access to all relevant entities at the point of entry.

To complement the infrastructure-related activities, IOM, jointly with the Ministry of Health and Social Protection and the Border Forces of the Republic of Tajikistan, organized training on emergency health response at PoE. These trainings were attended by health and non-health staff of the Ruzvay border crossing point, medical specialists from Darvoz district’s primary health-care facilities, and epidemiologists from the regions of Ishkoshim and Khorog.

“We highly appreciate the international community’s efforts to strengthen the healthcare capacity at the border and are interested in replicating this IOM activity at other border crossing points in Tajikistan to contribute to the implementation of International Health Regulations”—Dr. Navruz Jafarov, Head of Sanitary and Epidemiology Control and Emergency.

Kazakhstan

In March 2023, IOM held a consultation meeting with the Inter-Agency Working Group (IAWG) comprising representatives from the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Border Service of the National Security Committee. The meeting focused on trans-border communication mechanisms.

As a result of the needs assessment conducted in 2022, the Ministry of Health invited IOM and WHO to work together on establishing the National Methodology of Advanced Education Training for PoE-based health staff from both the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Finance.

The project has allowed for an interagency approach to be established in preparedness and response to public health emergencies.

The government of Kazakhstan has established a pool of national instructors to be deployed to conduct training for health and non-health staff at PoE on countering the spread of particularly dangerous diseases and other infections. In April 2023, IOM continued the series of training for PoE staff (representatives of the Sanitary-quarantine Control Department Ministry of Health, State Revenue Department, Ministry of Finance, Border Academy of the National Security Committee) with the instructors formed by representatives of Department of Sanitary and Epidemiological Control of the Ministry of Health and the Border Academy. The two-day training was conducted at the premises of the Border Academy in Almaty.

One of the achievements from these training sessions is the institutionalization of training materials for officers (students of senior courses and those on advanced training) at the Border Academy of the National Security Committee. Three hours of thematic courses based on these materials were also added to the Border Academy's education calendar.

Additionally, the Border Service of the National Security Committee has given the Ministry of Health access to the Regional Training Centre to conduct regular training sessions for health and non-health staff at PoE. The training materials have also been updated and revised during the training of trainers conducted by the pool of instructors in September 2023.



Cascade training for health and non-health staff at a point of entry, Kazakhstan

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Based on the needs assessment conducted at ten PoE of Kazakhstan, IOM, in close cooperation with the State authorities purchased the office equipment for the Sanitary Quarantine Point "Dostyk" at the Kazakh-Chinese border. Additionally, office equipment was purchased for the training class of the Border Service of the National Security Committee of the Republic of Kazakhstan in Uralsk. This equipment is intended for conducting training sessions such as "Epidemiologists for Epidemiologists" and "Epidemiologists for Interacting Services." Information kiosks were also installed at four PoE with the highest passenger traffic.



Handover ceremony, Astana

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Simulation exercise for health and non-health staff at a point of entry, Kyrgyzstan

© IOM

Kyrgyzstan

IOM worked to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and other infectious diseases by promoting holistic health management at points of entry (PoE). This effort focused on enhancing the knowledge and experience of PoE staff through training and simulation exercises (SIMEX) and providing PoE with sufficient equipment and capacity to strengthen prevention, detection, and response capabilities.

In April 2023, two comprehensive SIMEXs for health and non-health staff at PoE were conducted in Issyk Kul and Osh, Kyrgyzstan. Staff from sanitary quarantine points of the Ministry of Health, as well as border defence, customs, veterinary, phytosanitary, and other departments collaborated to test response and coordination mechanisms for various simulated public health emergencies. The SIMEXs enhanced the ability of 48 staff from 12 permanent PoE to respond to public health emergencies. Moreover, the recognition of the importance of improved coordination and communication among different PoE agencies, along with regular simulation exercises for proper training and preparedness for public health emergencies, has led to plans for additional training by different agencies. These efforts aim to further maintain and enhance management capabilities during public health crises at the border.



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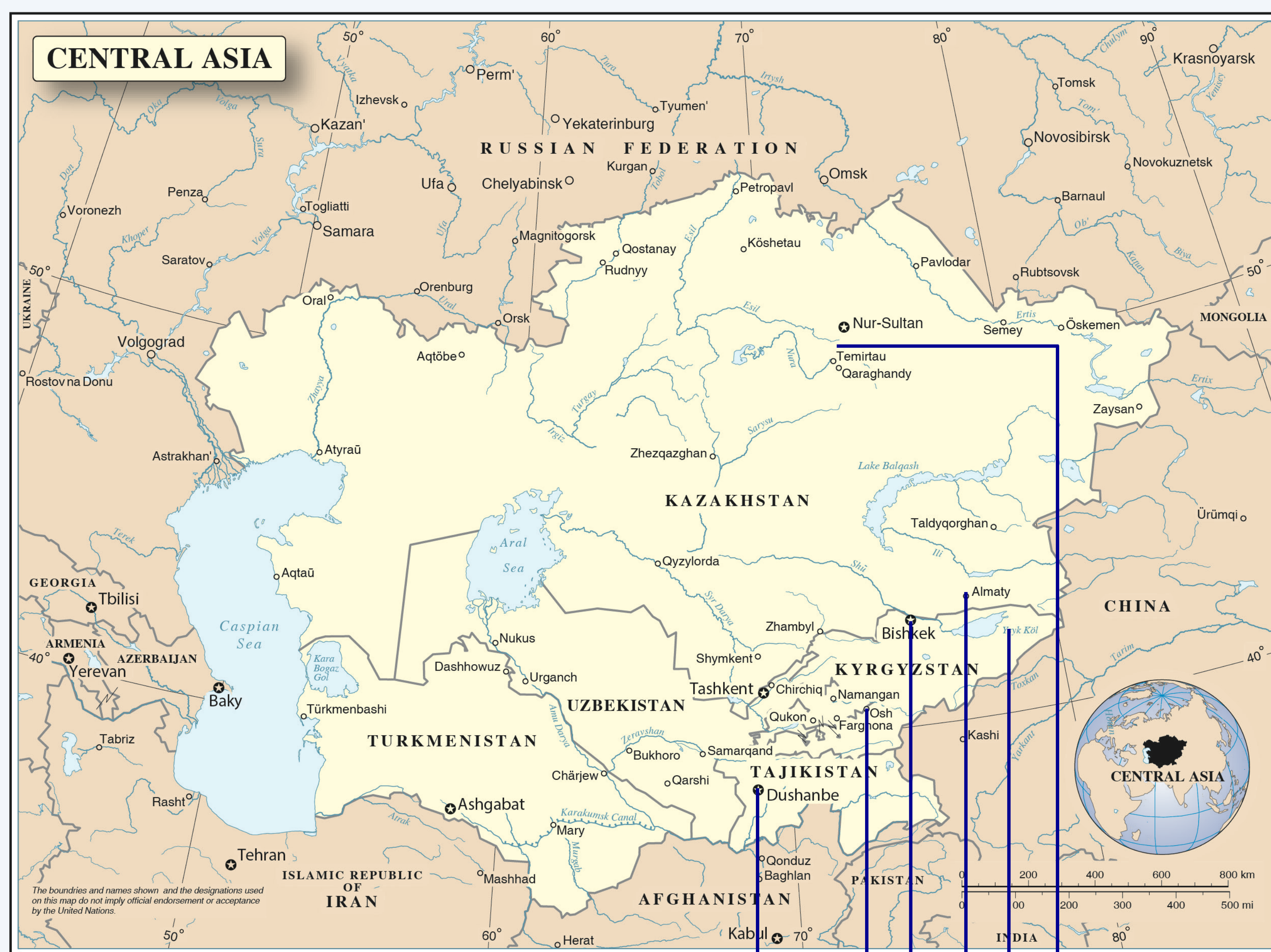


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In May 2023, a grand ceremony was held to hand over necessary equipment, including medical equipment, vehicles, office equipment, and uniforms, to the State Sanitary and Epidemiological Surveillance on Transport (CSSEST) under the Ministry of Health of Kyrgyzstan. All 12 permanent PoE were equipped with more than 200 necessary pieces of medical equipment, and the six most remote PoE have received additional ambulances. This ensures that passengers with suspected or confirmed infectious diseases can be transported promptly, comprehensively strengthening the health quarantine capabilities of Kyrgyzstan's 12 permanent PoE.



ACHIEVEMENT MAP



Dushanbe (18-19 May):
Regional Dialogue on Health Security through Improving Cross-Border Cooperation and Communication


Osh (April):
Comprehensive simulation exercise

Bishkek (26 May):
Handover ceremony of equipment to CSSEST


Astana (July):
Handover ceremony of office equipment for training centres and Sanitary Quarantine Point

Issyk Kul (April):
Comprehensive simulation exercise


Almaty (April):
Two-day training for PoE staff

- 

16 # PoE equipped

- 

40+ # Trainings conducted

- 

300+ # Staff trained

Pre-migration Health Activities

Pre-migration health activities (PMHAs), including health-related travel assistance, are some of IOM's longest-standing services for migrants, including refugees. They are carried out as part of the process for obtaining a visa, family reunification or international employment, or of specific migrant assistance programmes, and during post-emergency relocation and reintegration. They are key in ensuring safe migration processes for migrants, including refugees, the communities they leave and those they join.

In 2023, more than 10,000 refugees located in 27 countries of Europe and Central Asia were provided with resettlement support to over 13 countries of destination including the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and EU countries. Furthermore, over 25,000 migrants were processed in 22 countries for the purpose of immigration due to pursue of resettlement, higher education, and career advancement. Reflecting national differences in immigration and public policies and practices, IOM provided a diverse range of health assessment requirements among receiving countries. IOM has ensured safe and dignified travel for the refugees travelling under the auspice of the organization, through the provision of pre-departure evaluations and stabilization as required, asserting fitness to travel and travel assistance – medical care throughout the travel including the continuation of care upon arrival to the final destinations.



35,218

Migration health assessments



11,469

Vaccine doses administered



461

Medical escorts assigned to refugees for travel



IOM physician conducts a health history discussion, Almaty, Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan

In 2023, IOM Kazakhstan continued to provide services to the immigrant and refugee populations resettling to UK, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and USA and supported a wider scope of resettlement activities operated by IOM in Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan).



3,799 # Migration health assessments in Kazakhstan

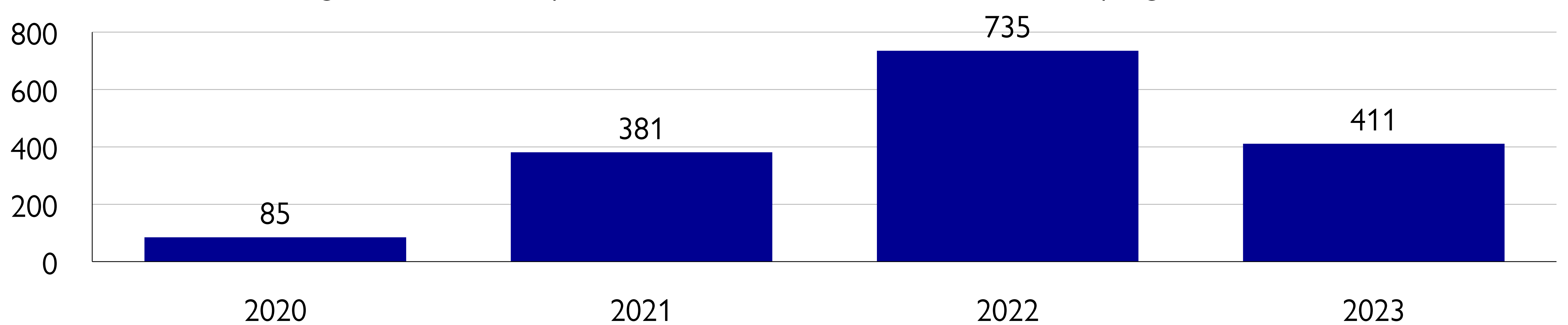
403 # Migration health assessments in Kyrgyzstan

1,105 # Beneficiaries supported with pre-embarkation checks, resettling from Central Asian countries to the US, Canada, Australia, Norway, UK, Netherlands, and the Republic of Moldova

Belarus

In 2019, IOM Belarus together with national partners set up a national assisted voluntary return and reintegration (AVRR) mechanism providing a dignified return and sustainable reintegration to stranded migrants who wish to return voluntarily to their countries of origin. In close cooperation with UNHCR, state migration authorities and NGO partners, IOM emphasizes a needs-based approach to AVRR activities and finds a tailored solution to every vulnerable migrant depending on their legal and family status, socio-economic situation, and health.

Migrants who have opted for a humane return within the AVRR programme



IOM is implementing the programme in line with its voluntary return and reintegration guidelines. Under the AVRR programme, the beneficiaries undergo a pre-embarkation check (PEC) 24-72 hours prior to departure. People with significant medical conditions are provided travel health assistance as needed (e.g. wheelchair, supply of medication, medical escort, etc.) from the point of departure to the final destination in the country of origin, after agreement with the regional AVRR focal point. Applicants with significant medical conditions or worsening chronic diseases, after coordination with the IOM physician, are referred to appropriate clinics until their condition improves and they are fit to travel.



Republic of Moldova

Since the start of the war in Ukraine on 24 February 2022, and in line with the organization's humanitarian transport guidelines, IOM Moldova continued to support Ukrainian refugees and Third-country Nationals (TCNs) fleeing the war through the ground transportation and air transfers for all persons interested in and willing to relocate to EU and associated countries. To ensure safe and dignified return assistance for TCNs fleeing Ukraine, IOM provided a range of services, including pre-departure health assistance. IOM Moldova continued to assess fitness to travel, providing stabilization treatment and pre-departure care where needed, making special travel arrangements, such as provision of medical escorts, and facilitating continuity of care upon arrival. At the border crossing points Palanca and Otaci IOM has deployed mobile medical teams who conduct pre-embarkation health checks (PECs) of Ukrainian refugees travelling further. In 2023, IOM conducted in total of 4,272 PECs for Ukrainian refugees and TCNs.



Refugees
2,391

PECs within ground transportation from Palanca to Husi (Romania) and Otaci to Iasi (Romania) provided by IOM mobile medical teams

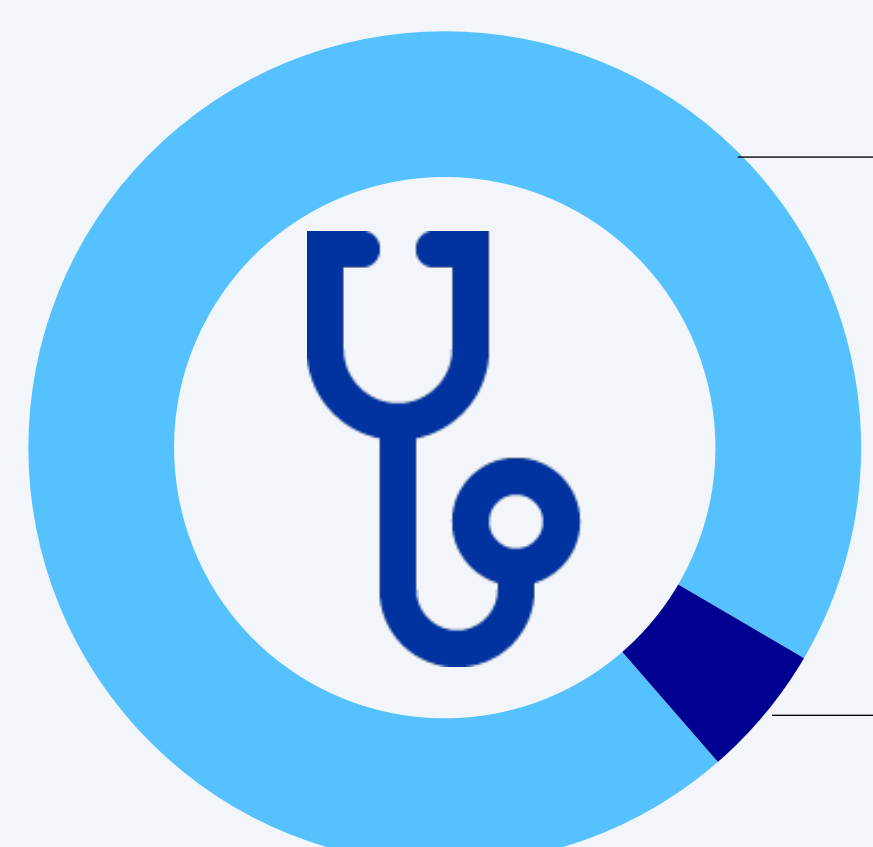
Individuals
1,428

required medical assistance and received pre-departure stabilization treatment



470

PECs for relocation to EU Member States



Refugees
2,730

received primary health-care consultations at the Otaci and Palanca border crossing points

Moldovan citizens
149



1,411

PECs for the Assisted Voluntary Humanitarian Returns



66 persons

supported with continuous medical care during the movement



33

Medical escorts have been assigned



The IOM mobile team performs predeparture fitness for travel check to a Ukrainian refugee relocating to a European Union Member State

Emergency Health

IOM's humanitarian mandate includes **providing health support in crisis situations**, such as mass displacement and weakened public health infrastructure. The challenge is to quickly in conflict, natural disasters, and public health emergencies. The organization directly offers medical services to migrants including internally displaced persons, returnees, refugees as well as host communities, requiring medical care or psychosocial support in camps, along migration routes, and in hard-to-reach areas. When new emergencies arise, such as natural disasters or conflicts, communities often experience increased health services to meet essential needs.

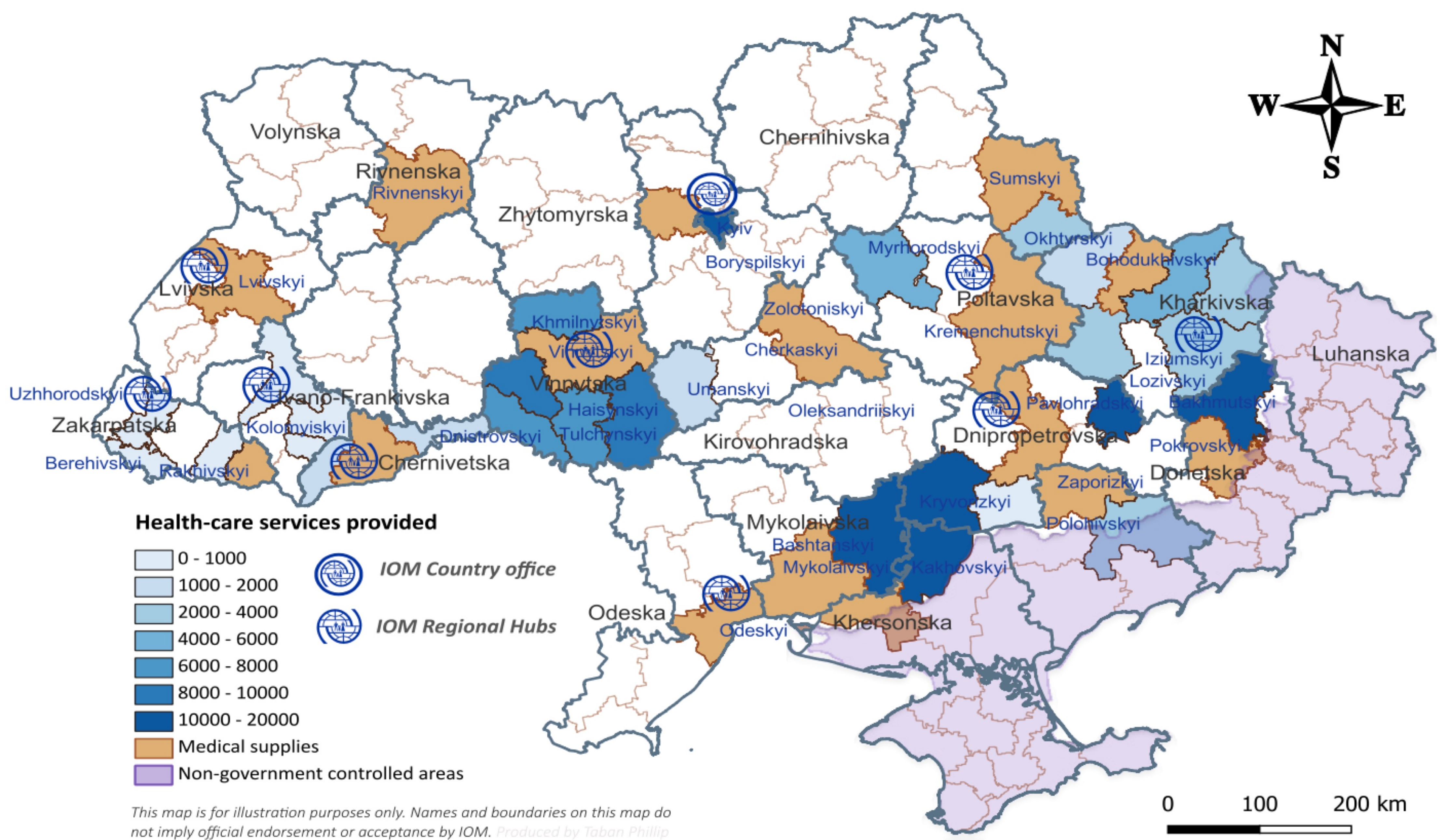
Ukraine

IOM has been providing crucial health-care services to people affected by the conflict in Ukraine since the start of the war in February 2022. IOM has established mobile medical clinics to improve access to healthcare, especially in rural areas where internally displaced people are living. This is done through direct health-care service provision by mobile teams to hard-to-reach communities, the establishment of referral networks to specialized care, health promotion through community engagement and vaccination, supporting access to mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services, medical

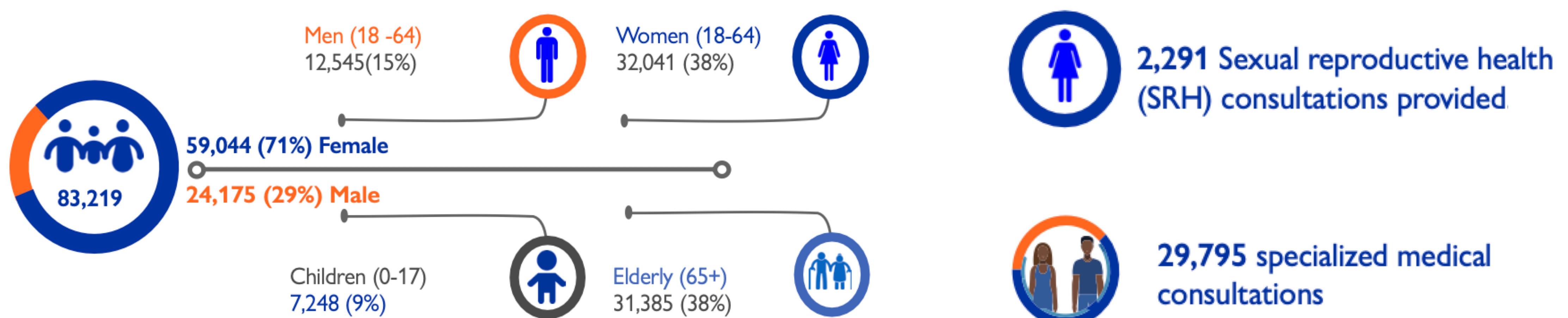
supply donations, capacity building, and health system strengthening and recovery.

IOM's emergency health programming aims to ensure that essential life-saving healthcare is available and accessible to those affected by crises. IOM uses targeted interventions that uphold humanitarian principles, protect dignity, and improve the health outcomes of people affected by crises and host communities.

2023 Emergency Health Programming Geographic Coverage – Ukraine



Health-care consultations by age and gender





Health-care Services: Mobile Clinics

In 2023, **83,219 primary health-care consultations** (male: 24,175; female: 59,044) were provided in Kharkivska, Khersonska, Mykolaivska, Cherkaska, Vinnytska, and Zaporizka. Patients received different services including curative, preventive, and promotive health services, trauma care, referral, and psychosocial counselling. The primary morbidities reported include cardiovascular diseases, endocrine disorders, acute reactions to stress, and other non-emergency diseases. In addition, **32,086 secondary health-care consultations** (male: 7,572; female: 24,514) including sexual and reproductive health (SRH), clinical laboratory testing, and ultrasound services were provided.

Medical Supply Donations

To support and strengthen the war-affected health system, in 2023, IOM donated medical supplies consisting of medical devices such as expert class ultrasound devices, medical equipment, and medical consumables to **218 health facilities and government institutions** from 16 oblasts. These medical supplies worth **USD 2.8 million**. Since April 2022, **318 health facilities and government entities** from 19 oblasts across Ukraine received medical supplies.

In December 2023, five fully equipped ambulances were donated to the cities of Dnipro (3) and Zaporizhzhia (2) as a show of humanitarian support.



Capacity building and on-the-job training

The war in Ukraine has had a devastating impact on both military personnel and civilians, with thousands killed and injured. IOM has been working with partners to provide training and support to health staff in Ukraine to better respond to trauma and conflict-related injuries. This training has included lectures, hands-on training, and discussions focused on specific instances, aiming to strengthen the capacity and skills of secondary-level health workers.

In 2023, 3,088 healthcare workers received training, which brings the cumulative figure since April 2022 to 9,876 from 12 oblasts across Ukraine.



Coordination with UNFPA—Clinical Management of Rape (CMR) Training



The IOM health team facilitated and participated in the comprehensive five-day Clinical Management of Rape (CMR) training for medical providers in collaboration with UNFPA and UNICEF. Thirty participants from all over Ukraine represented various UN agencies, and humanitarian and volunteer organizations, and worked collaboratively to better understand survivor-centred care. Participants learned about gender-based violence (GBV), prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA), clinical management of rape, including MHPSS, and referral pathways. The main goal of the training was to apply practical skills, adapt CMR principles to the Ukrainian context, and advocate for amendments in Ukrainian law.

Health System Recovery

IOM supports the Ukraine Health System Recovery plan. Based on comprehensive assessments conducted in 21 (primary and secondary) health facilities in different oblasts, IOM in collaboration with the Office of Health System Recovery chose 13 health facilities to be supported for infrastructure repair/rehabilitation, capacity building as well as procurement and donation of requested medical equipment and commodities.

By December 2023, IOM finalized the repair and recovery of six health facilities in Mykolaiv, Odesa, Vinnytsia, Donetsk, Kherson, and Kyiv city. The two hospitals of the most recently repaired and rehabilitated hospitals in Mykolaiv and Odesa were handed over to the local health authorities in December 2023.



Surgical and patient care services and mentoring

Ukraine's prolonged conflict has had a significant impact on the country's healthcare sector, particularly surgical and patient care capacities. IOM is engaging with partners on mentoring efforts for Ukrainian surgeons, nurses, and other healthcare workers to assist in addressing pressing needs and developing capacity. IOM collaborated with UK-Med to provide training and mentoring to healthcare personnel in rural hospitals in western Ukraine that handle war-wounded patients. International surgeons and nursing mentors have visited these facilities to advise local teams on best practices in trauma care, postoperative care, rehabilitation programmes, and infection control.

In 2023, with IOM's support, surgeries for war-related injuries were performed on 213 patients.



Risk communication and community engagement

Through its implementing partners, IOM is reaching communities in the East using different awareness-raising message mechanisms. Teams of volunteers work in locations where IOM's mobile clinics are scheduled to go. They use flyers developed by the IOM risk communication and community engagement (RCCE) team with useful information about available health services, treatments and disease prevention. In addition, the volunteer teams collect feedback from the communities including rumors about diseases, health problems, etc.

In 2023, 32,437 people were reached with flyers and other health promotion and information activities across Ukraine.



Kakhovka Dam Flood response

The Kakhovka Hydroelectric Power Plant (HPP) dam was destroyed on 6 June 2023. This resulted in uncontrolled water release from the Kakhovka Reservoir and flooding of riverfront communities downstream towards the Dnipro River Delta, posing a significant risk of flooding and jeopardising the lives of residents.

To mitigate the immediate health risk stemming from the dam destroyal, IOM:

- Prepositioned medical supplies at its Odesa warehouse to effectively respond to waterborne diseases, including cholera epidemics.
- Donated water purification granules and tablets, water canisters, protective nets, buckets, chlorine, and other medical supplies to Kherson City Clinical Hospital for the prevention and management of waterborne diseases.
- Distributed RCCE materials on waterborne diseases to communities in Kherson and Odesa.
- Deployed a mobile clinic team to Kherson and Mykolaiv to improve access to healthcare services.

Republic of Moldova

The continuous escalation of conflict in Ukraine has forced six million people to flee the country, with the majority seeking refuge and protection in Ukraine's closest neighbouring countries. Millions of refugees and Third Country Nationals (TCNs) entered from Ukraine into the Republic of Moldova. The influx of people fleeing Ukraine brought an unprecedented human mobility emergency for the Republic of Moldova.

Initially concentrated on providing urgent medical support during the emergency, IOM expanded its support to ensure sustained and tailored healthcare for refugees over the two years, recognizing the importance of continuity in long-term healthcare. This shift underscores a commitment to the holistic well-being of refugees from Ukraine, aiming to address both immediate health concerns and pave the way for sustained, specialized medical assistance in their host countries as well as strengthening national health systems to respond to increased needs.

IOM Moldova has been aiding Ukrainian refugees and TCNs by offering cancer diagnosis and treatment since May 2022, partnering with local institutions. In collaboration with the Oncology Institute and the National Health Insurance Company, IOM Moldova has been supporting 379 refugees from Ukraine (2,166 since the start of the war) through the provision of cancer diagnosis and treatment services and dialysis sessions. The support has contributed to alleviating the substantial strain placed on the Republic of Moldova's national health budget due to the influx of refugees who need specialized healthcare services.

"I found out that the service was free. I did not know it would be such a high level of comfort. We are doing well and grateful for the medical help received. I can say that the nurses and the whole dialysis centre saved my life."

—A patient from Odesa



A symposium titled "Continuity of Cancer Care in Emergencies" was organized in collaboration with the Embassy of Italy and local institutes in June. The event focused on cancer-related policies and practices for refugees and migrants, presenting findings from a study on cancer care for Ukrainian refugees in Moldova. Discussions included challenges, knowledge sharing, and best practices to ensure healthcare continuity during displacement.

Ukrainian women refugees reached with breast cancer awareness sessions



220

In 2023

Exceptional medical care and treatment (cancer care and dialysis)



379

In 2023



IOM's "Breast Cancer Early Detection Campaign" across October to December 2023, strived to enhance awareness of early cancer detection among Ukrainian refugees and migrants. In Chisinau, Balti, Ungheni, and Causeni, regional centres offered free medical services, information, and tests to women refugees and migrants across the Republic of Moldova. The campaign's impact extends beyond its duration, aiming for lasting changes in healthcare-seeking behaviour, improving access to services and potentially preventing and detecting breast cancer cases in the future.



IOM has been contributing to health system strengthening in the Republic of Moldova through targeted donations of medical equipment and medicines over the past year.

In February, the Ministry of Health's clinical hospital received an ambulance and several medical devices, such as vital function monitors, examination tables, blood glucose monitors, electrocardiographs, and pulse oximeters. The ambulance will be used for inter-hospital transfers of patients and is equipped with all the medical requirements needed for patient transportation. IOM provides health screening and stabilization for refugees and third-country nationals on the move in the clinical hospital.

In April, the Cahul District Council received a wheelchair-accessible minibus donated by IOM Moldova. aims at supporting people with disabilities with adapted transportation to access social services provided by the Cahul public authorities, including personal assistance, social care at home, and day centre for children with disabilities.



Two new ambulances, 45 pulse oximeters, 22 electrocardiographs, and 315 headlamps were donated to the National Centre for Pre-hospital Emergency Medical Assistance (CNAMUP).

The handover ceremony took place in April 2023. The donation is worth USD 300,000.



The Oncological Institute received a new lot of medical devices and medicine for patients with cancer, both children and adults, from the IOM. The medical institution received neuromuscular transmission monitors, ultrasound devices, pumps for managing chemotherapeutical substances, heating devices for patients, and implantable chambers for chemotherapy with accessories and other consumables for the treatment of persons with cancer. The donation is worth USD 150,000.



IOM donated to the Clinical Hospital of the Ministry of Health a medical oxygen production station, a high-performance ultrasonography machine, four defibrillators and other modern devices, totalling USD 238,000.



In August, IOM donated 300 portable medical refrigerators to the National Centre for Prehospital Emergency Medical Assistance, enhancing medical supply storage and transport efficiency. Vital medical equipment, including an endocavitary probe and a needle guide, was also provided to the Oncology Institute of Moldova, enhancing its capabilities in oncology diagnostics and treatment.



Various medical equipment, such as tonometers, pulse oximeters, thermometers, ophthalmoscopes, glucometers, ultrasound inhalers, and the Audiometer Sibelsound 400 with W50 software, has been donated to the Rehabilitation Centre Sanatorium Constructorul.

Response to Türkiye Earthquake

Since the February 2023 earthquakes, IOM has been involved in response efforts in Türkiye and Northwest Syria (NWS) and is supporting the long-term recovery of affected communities. Under the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Ministry of Health (MoH) and IOM, IOM supported the delivery of essential health services to earthquake-affected populations in nine provinces through two different modalities:

- Support to MoH-led mobile health services with 15 rental vehicles to mobilize MoH healthcare staff.
- Direct service delivery through implementing partners Médecins du Monde Türkiye in five counties of Hatay province and Doctors Worldwide Türkiye in Adiyaman, Malatya, and Kahramanmaraş provinces. IOM's scope of health support was to strengthen primary healthcare services including consultations, screenings, family planning, and Infant and Young Children Feeding (IYCF) counselling provided separately to the target groups in addition to health education, psychological consultations, and distribution of hygiene supplies and education materials.



IOM supported the donation of medical supplies and equipment to MoH facilities and mobile teams to establish health services.

Moreover, IOM developed capacities of health-care professionals of MoH and IPs through training on priority health topics as coordinated with MoH and partners.



Direct health service delivery through the implementing partner Médecins du Monde Türkiye

ACHIEVEMENT MAP



15 vehicles were rented by IOM for MoH's mobile health services in 9 cities.

Persons reached by the mobile health services



Worth of medical supply donations

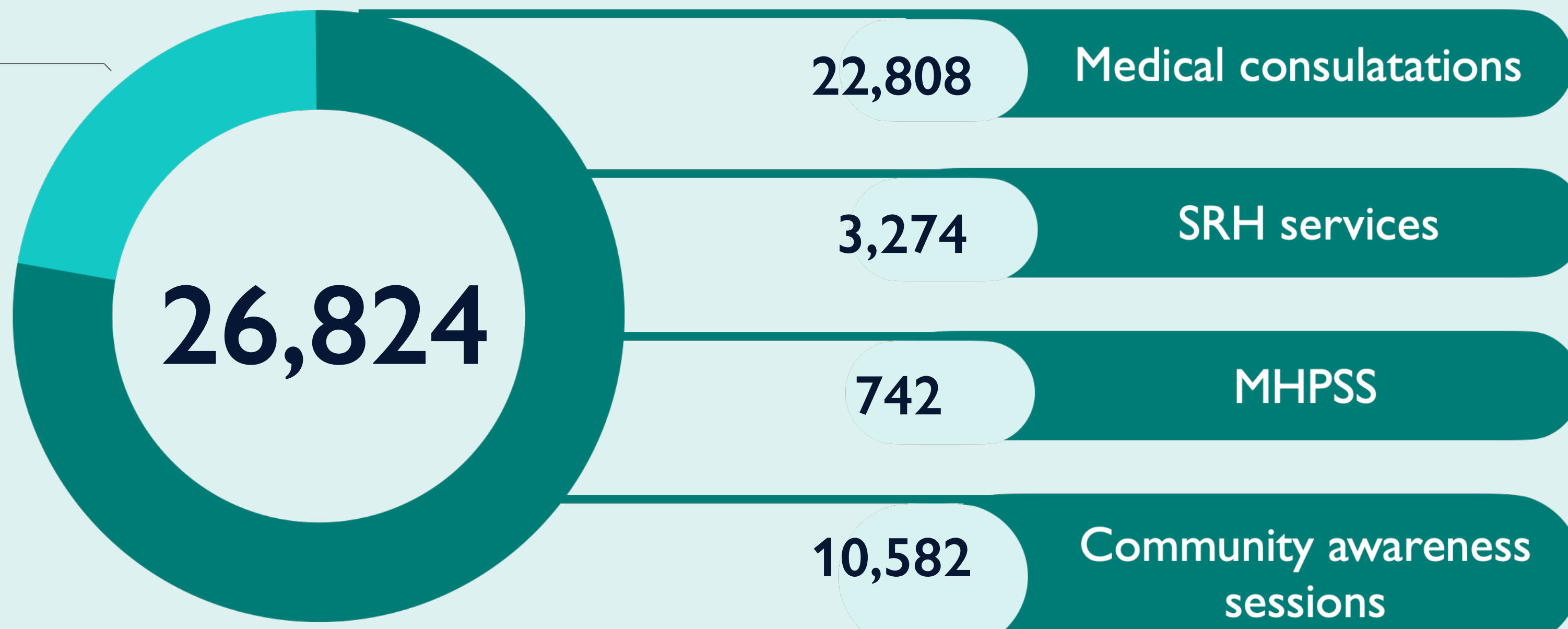


Capacity building for partners and MoH



* This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM.

Refugees
5,917



A total of 26,824 individuals were reached in Adiyaman, Hatay, Malatya, and Kahramanmaraş, in coordination with implementing partners.

Afghanistan and neighbouring countries

Following decades of conflict, the COVID-19 pandemic, recurrent disasters linked to climate change (including floods, and drought like conditions), and earthquakes, Afghanistan is facing chronic poverty and economic instability and dangerously approaching systemic collapse. As widespread conflict in Afghanistan ended following the events of 15 August 2021, the country's economic decline, combined with the catastrophic effects of recurrent disasters on Afghans' livelihoods, constitute the primary driver of displacement in and out of the country.

IOM Turkmenistan launched a Mobile Migrant Resource Centre (MMRC) staffed with medical officers and a legal consultant in October 2023. The MMRC team has provided medical and legal services to 1,062 beneficiaries in Ahal and Lebap regions.

The MMRC team has also developed new medical cards (patient's history books) for each Afghan migrant community member with a medical history of the patient for the consistency and accuracy of the diagnosis and treatment. National consultants established the schedule of visits per village, enabling the beneficiaries to access medical and legal services on a regular basis. Several previous medical diagnoses and medical prescriptions were revisited and corrected. A number of referrals to regional stationary medical centres were made. Medical case management has been also established. Local medical staff is learning from the experience and practices demonstrated by visiting MMRC medical staff.

Turkmenistan



Afghan community members provided with medical services by the MMRC team

Men	250
Women	400
Girls	102
Boys	130



Uzbekistan



Tashkent

IOM is tailoring its assistance to Afghan nationals based on interviews to define the need for medical assistance. Upon the scheduling of medical appointments, people can undergo doctor consultations and take laboratory tests at the IOM partner clinic.



From July until December 2023, 12 Afghans were provided with medical consultations and diagnostic tests. Beneficiaries can cover these expenses through multipurpose cash assistance provided by IOM.

Termez

IOM Uzbekistan launched a mobile migrant resource centre (MMRC) in partnership with the local NGO “Barqaror Hayot” in Termez. The main goal of this intervention was to provide protection services to Afghan migrants and local vulnerable population in the Surkhandarya region (bordering Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Afghanistan), through enhanced access to services, including medical assistance, psychosocial support, legal aid, and counselling.

MMRC team

- migration consultant
- trainer on internet skills
- general practitioner
- ultrasound doctor
- cardiologist
- social worker
- psychologist
- lawyer

travel to the makhalla committees of Termez city and other 14 districts of the Surkhandarya region

at least 3 times a week and 12 times a month

Target Beneficiaries

- migrants (planned to leave for work and returned) and members of their families;
- Afghan nationals (adults and children) temporarily residing in Uzbekistan
- vulnerable population groups (unemployed, disabled people, mothers with many children, women who suffered from domestic violence)



To provide essential medical support, IOM cooperates with a medical clinic and pharmacy in Termez. A general practitioner from the MMRC team provides consultations to individuals, subsequently referring them to the clinic for further consultations and testing. Following medical assessment, individuals receive prescribed medications from the pharmacy. In total, 59 individuals, including locals and Afghans, visited the clinic and pharmacy in Termez.

- General practitioner conducts: 1) Information mini-sessions on providing first aid at home using available diagnostic devices (tonometer, thermometer, glucometer, pulse oximeter) and 2) Providing primary medical examination, selection and referral to qualified medical care (examination and appointment at the private clinic) and treatment (purchase of prescribed medicines at the pharmacy).
- Ultrasound doctor and cardiologist conduct examinations using portable ultrasound and electrocardiographic devices and hand over the results to the beneficiaries for further treatment.

Total people examined by general practitioner	813	Total people examined by ultrasound doctor	244
Total referrals to clinic and pharmacy	59	Total people examined by cardiologist	207
Total people received psychological consultations	303		

Humanitarian Assistance to refugees in Armenia

Following decades of tensions between Azerbaijan and Armenia, heavy fighting broke out once more in September 2023, leading to several casualties and high levels of displacement. More than 100,000 refugees have arrived in Armenia, including entire families, men, women, children, and older persons.



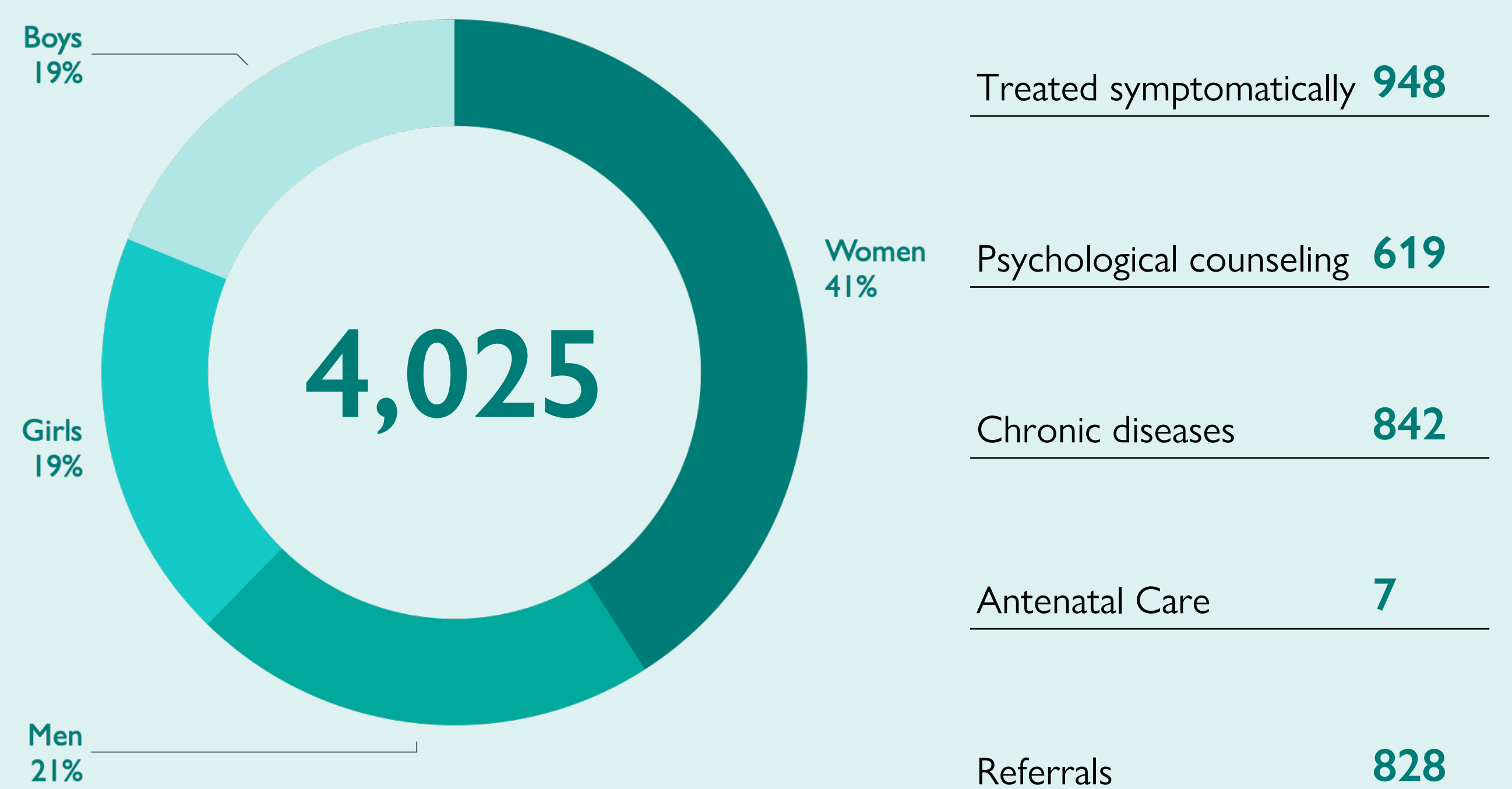
IOM almost immediately started providing primary health-care and MHPSS services in various locations – predominantly rural and densely populated by refugees, where access to the national health-care system is difficult. The mobile teams are multi-disciplinary and include a general physician, paediatrician, sonographer, and laboratory technician, and engage specialists from areas such as neurology, cardiology, and infectious diseases, among others on a rolling basis based on the needs highlighted by the communities.

In 2023, a total of 72 mobile clinics were conducted and benefited a total of 4,025 individuals.



Shirak (1), (1)	Vayots Dzor (4)	Syunik (5)
Armarvir (6), (1)	Gegharkunik (7), (3)	
Aragatsotn (2), (9)	Tavush (2)	
Ararat (10), (12)	Kotayk (3), (6)	

- Establishment of the Global Emergency Response Program (GERP) 2023
- Provision of Humanitarian Assistance to Refugees in Armenia



Mobile clinic for refugees, Armenia

Addressing Key Health Issues

Although migration itself is not a risk factor, the conditions that migrants and mobile populations encounter during the migration process can make them susceptible to communicable diseases, such as HIV/AIDS. The peculiarities and challenges of the migration process, including being separated from the family and working under perilous conditions, are enhancing migrant workers' vulnerabilities and drive them into risk taking.

Uzbekistan

HIV rates continue to increase in Central Asia, including Uzbekistan, affecting specific populations: Ninety-six percent of all new HIV infections occur among key populations (i.e. people who inject drugs (PWID), men who have sex with men (MSM), sex workers and prisoners) and their sexual partners, including migrants and mobile men. The migration flow is of concern given migrants' increased vulnerability to HIV and poor access to HIV prevention and care in host countries.

IOM supports the Government of Uzbekistan efforts to counter the spread of HIV through a migrant-inclusive approach HIV policy development and increasing awareness levels on HIV risks, increasing prevention and treatment among migrants and their family members, as well as delivering training for healthcare providers.

IOM Uzbekistan extended its network of partners and opened new doors to thematic meetings with relevant government organizations, UN Agencies and NGOs to discuss potential collaborations on current projects and beyond on HIV, migration and cross-cutting issues on health since December 2022. IOM Uzbekistan organized two project working meetings of the Multisectoral Project Facilitation Team (MPFT) in 2023.

- IOM Uzbekistan's recommendations on "Expanding the coverage of migrants with voluntary HIV testing" was included in the Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan on 20 January 2023 # PP-14.
- IOM highlighted the main gaps existing in legislation on HIV and migration issues and recommendations to the representatives of the committee on Judicial and Legal Issues and Anti-Corruption of the Senate. They expressed interest in recommendations that can be considered further in the development of new normative documents, in particular the adoption of the "Law on external labour migration" that was declined by the Senate in 2022.

State agencies and departments

NGOs

UN agencies

The Committee for Sanitary and Epidemiological Welfare and Public Health of The Ministry of Health of the Republic of Uzbekistan

Nihol

UNAIDS

Ishonch va hayot

UNDP

The Republican AIDS Center

Istiqbolli avlod

WHO

The Agency for External Labor Migration under the Ministry of Poverty Reduction and Employment of the Republic of Uzbekistan

Anti-cancer Society of Uzbekistan

UNFPA

Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan

Yuksalish

Committee on Women and Gender Equality of the Senate of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan

Ministry of Youth Policy and Sports

Multisectoral Expert Council



The baseline knowledge, attitude, and practice (KAP) survey data collection on awareness of HIV risks, prevention, and treatment for migrants and their family members in five regions started in November. The KAP survey covers questions on the awareness of HIV risks, prevention, and access to treatment among potential migrants and their family members.

After receiving training from IOM on data collection methods, five selected NGOs started data collection. In total, 437 respondents (140 Women and 297 men) were interviewed.

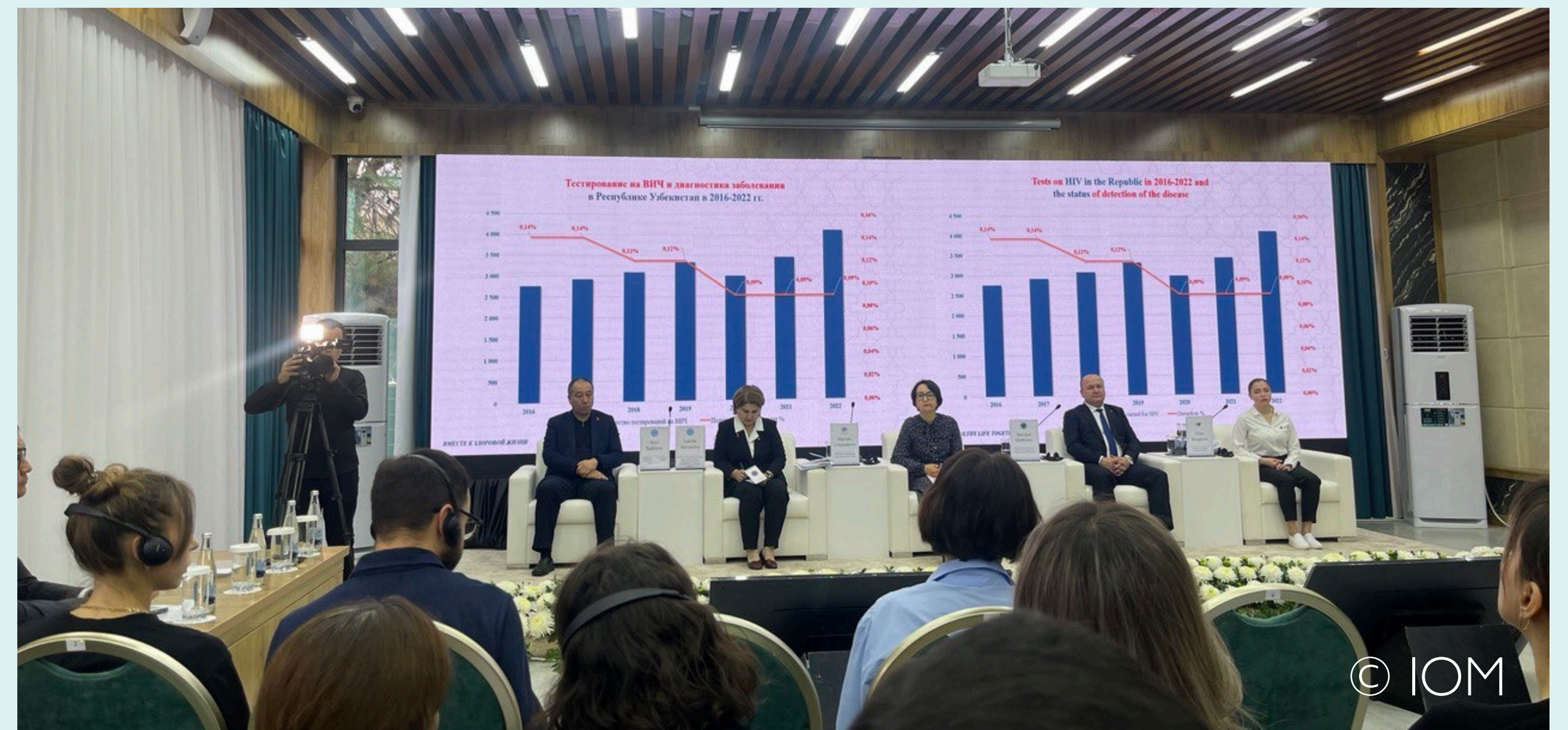
The KAP survey data collection also integrated rapid HIV testing for migrants, facilitated by partners like the Sanepidcommittee. IOM had issued a letter to regional AIDS Centers, granting five NGOs access to 500 HIV rapid tests. Additionally, NGOs initiated an outreach campaign, offering vouchers as incentives for migrants to engage in the study.

In November 2023, IOM Uzbekistan conducted a training for trainers (ToT) for five NGOs from five regions in Uzbekistan on conducting awareness raising on HIV among migrants and their family members. Considerable time was dedicated towards discussing life realities of Uzbek migrants, gender relations as well innovative ways of reaching out to migrants, including through social media.



“Being aware of the relation between gender roles and decision-making in this context is essential when designing migrant-friendly HIV prevention programmes, and testing and treatment services.”
— Ursula Wagner, Regional Migration Health Coordinator

On behalf of World AIDS Day on 1 December a press conference was held in Tashkent, organized under the umbrella of the Sanepidcommittee of the MoH and AIDS Center.



“An inclusive approach and government support is very important to people living with HIV, in particular to migrants who are mostly vulnerable during migration.” —Zeynal Hajiyev, IOM Sub-Regional Coordinator for Central Asia and Chief of Mission in Uzbekistan

Georgia

In November, IOM, in close cooperation with the Embassy of France to Georgia and the Prometheus 2 project, organized the conference “Migration from Georgia to Europe and the Schengen Area – Multi-sectoral Cooperation to Counter Irregular Migration, Migration-Related Crime and to Better Regulate Health-Driven Migration”.

Considerable time was devoted to the specific phenomenon of health-driven migration from Georgia to various European countries. Over the past years, citizens of Georgia have increasingly addressed immigration agencies in the Schengen Area with asylum requests motivated by the desire to receive high-quality care for complicated health issues. In countries such as France, Switzerland and Austria this phenomenon has placed a significant burden on medical care facilities, whereas immigration agencies commonly qualify those asylum requests as being unfounded. Discussions focused on possible measures to stem this tide of health-driven migration, while at the same time improving the scope of the Georgian healthcare system and its ability to meet the demands for complex treatment schemes as well as communications with potential migrants on the availability of services.

“IOM looks forward to start implementing the Georgia Cares project, in partnership with the World Health Organisation (WHO), and with funding by the Swiss and Austrian Governments. Through a research and broad consultative process, this project will identify concrete actions to address drivers of health-related migration from Georgia. In the long run, this new initiative shall contribute to the Government of Georgia’s efforts to reduce the burden of unfounded asylum applications lodged abroad by citizens of Georgia and to the strengthening of the social protection environment in Georgia.”
—Sanja Celebic Lukovac, IOM Chief of Mission in Georgia



Belarus

In Belarus, the lack of reliable and gender-disaggregated data on health of migrants has prevented quality analysis to promote national policy and programming that support migrants' access to health services. The country also lacks a multisectoral platform to address migration health issues including communicable diseases.

IOM supports the Government of Belarus in aligning migration health policies and programmes to best international experiences. The focus lies on the prevention of communicable diseases, including tuberculosis, hepatitis, HIV, and COVID-19, through a multisectoral and gender-sensitive approach. This is achieved by generating evidence on migrants' health in the country and building the capacity of the government on relevant migration health issues.

In April 2023, IOM organized a roundtable discussion on migration and health, with participation from over 20 representatives of governmental and non-governmental organizations engaged in migration management. The main focus was on assessing the health vulnerabilities of migrants and their access to healthcare. Additionally, a multi-disciplinary training titled "Introduction to Migration and Health" was held in April, providing national specialists with comprehensive knowledge and skills on various aspects of migration and health.



In July 2023, a discussion was held with national partners from governmental and non-governmental sectors to address their capacity building needs. During the discussion, specialists with expertise in various fields explored ways to adapt training modules to the Belarusian context, incorporating data from recent IOM-led research on migrant health vulnerabilities and needs. The outcome reaffirmed national partners' commitment to developing a migrant-sensitive health system in Belarus, with a decision to actively engage in capacity-building efforts in migration and health.



In November 2023, IOM organized the seminar "Fundamentals of Migration Management: Migrant Health" to discuss enhancing migrants' access to medical care and improving coordination among state and public organizations in health and migration. Representatives from the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Internal Affairs, State Border Committee, public associations, and the academic community attended. During the seminar, participants examined the existing mechanism for referring trafficking victims, a collaborative effort between state bodies, public associations, and IOM. Teams at the seminar developed proposals, to be refined in subsequent sessions, aiming to ensure migrants' equitable access to medical care.



In December 2023, a meeting of national partners was held to review a draft compilation of educational materials on migrant health prepared by IOM international experts. National specialists discussed the modules' relevance to the Belarusian context and current migrant health vulnerabilities identified in an IOM study. Valuable proposals were made to enhance the design, broaden teaching methods, and consider the target audience's needs in the learning process.



Kyrgyzstan

Air pollution in residential neighbourhoods on the outskirts of Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan, is a public health emergency. At the same time, since the early 1990s, many internal migrants from various regions of the country have been moving to these areas in search of better living conditions. However, the accommodations in these areas are still inadequately connected to the city's public infrastructure. These groups are significantly exposed to health risks related to air pollution – including heart disease, cancer, and chronic respiratory diseases. With its activities, IOM aims to ameliorate the environmental conditions and ultimately the health of the residents.

In the continuation of the series of activities in 2022, the last phase of the information campaign was the photo exhibition "Tutun", aimed at raising public awareness on air pollution in Bishkek. All photos were by Shailoo Djekshenbaev, one of the most renowned contemporary photographers in Kyrgyzstan. The exhibition raised issues of infrastructure in residential areas, inadequate construction of new buildings, the process of internal migration and social integration.

In January 2023, IOM and the Unison Group held the opening ceremony of the photo exhibition "Tutun" at the Kyrgyz National Museum of Fine Arts named after Gapar Aitiev. Due to the popularity among citizens, the exhibition period was extended on a free basis until March 2023.



Medical consultations at Ak-Bosogo Community Park, Bishkek © IOM

Following the campaign and community events, IOM issued a call for small community health projects aimed at migrants who had completed training. The response was enthusiastic, with IOM receiving 26 applications from community initiatives. From these, the panel selected three projects.

The greening of a street with coniferous trees in Tunguch

IOM procured 94 trees (34 maples, 30 horse chestnut trees, 30 lindens). In March 2023, all trees were planted, local municipalities prepared the preconditions for planting, and more than 70 local residents participated in planting.



The creation of a community park in Ak-Bosogo

The Ak-Bosogo community park project, proposed by residents for four communities within their municipality, spans an area of 8,596 square meters. At the official opening of the community park in Ak Bosogo on 1 June 2023 residents celebrated the fruition of their collaborative efforts.



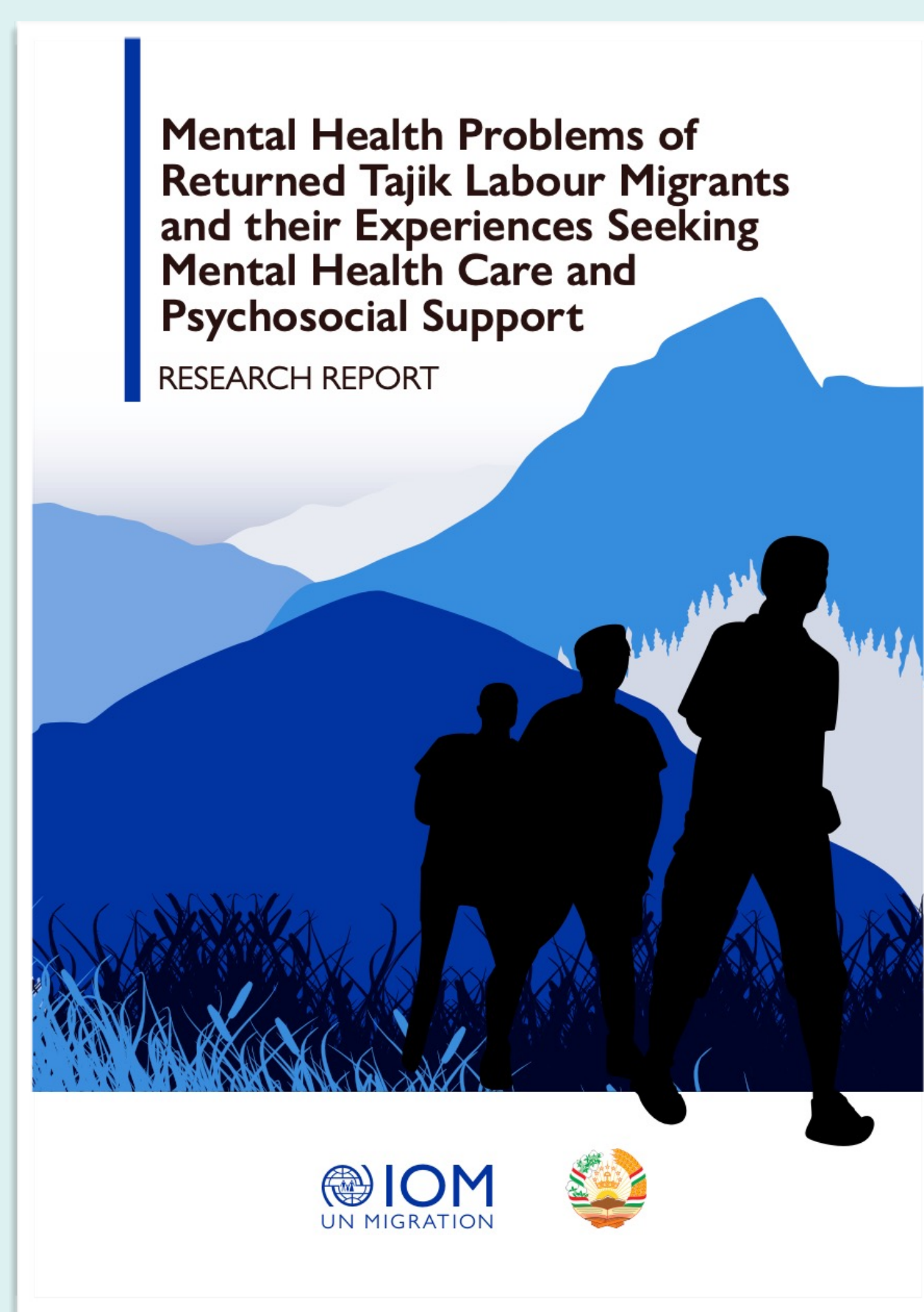
An innovative recycling project in Kolmo

This project aims to cultivate a distinct culture of waste collection in Kolmo, enhancing residents' ecological awareness. It focuses on improving the environmental situation by fostering a conscious approach to waste collection and segregation among the community.



Tajikistan

Tajikistan's economy relies heavily on labour migration, primarily to the Russian Federation. When abroad, many migrants work in 'dirty, difficult, and dangerous' jobs where they face great personal risk of injury, health deterioration, or mental health challenges. On return to Tajikistan, migrants may be suffering from physical injuries or disabilities sustained while working abroad, as well as psychological or mental health struggles. Supporting these return migrants and their families requires a holistic approach where health and non-health actors come together to work jointly to ensure that those struggling with these issues don't slip through the cracks.



The report is available online in English, Russian and Tajik languages.

IOM therefore aimed to assess the issues of mental health problems and disability among Tajik migrant workers (see research report on the left).

As a result of the project, the Ministry of Health and Social Protection (MoHSP) initiated the development of a National Programme on Mental Health, aiming for subsequent inclusion in the 2024 Government Plan for policy document development. It currently awaits governmental approval, with the MoHSP prepared to take the lead in collaboratively developing the mental health programme together with national and international partners. Also, a clinical protocol addressing Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) – a common mental disorder among returned Tajik migrants – has been developed and approved by the MoHSP's Principal Mental Health Specialist. This protocol has been seamlessly integrated into the daily practices of mental health specialists.

In October 2023, IOM hosted a roundtable on the health and reintegration issues of returned Tajik migrants. This roundtable greatly raised awareness among key decision-makers about the health issues of migrants. The authorities underlined the importance of providing evidence-based data on mental health and disability issues among return Tajik migrants. Documented research results can assist policymakers in advocating for the rights of Tajik migrants in high-level bilateral events between Tajikistan and host countries. Participants concluded that health and non-health actors should work together to promote the health of migrants through providing pre-departure preparation, social protection, dignified work, and access to health services.



Greater Immunization Coverage


Vaccines are one of the world's most critical and cost-effective tools for preventing outbreaks and keeping individuals and entire communities safe and healthy. Several public health emergencies, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, have demonstrated in the clearest terms that no one is protected from communicable diseases until everyone is. When it comes to migrant and other mobile populations, challenges to reach them with immunization services are manifold and specific strategies have to be designed and implemented to effectively address vaccine hesitancy among those groups, get doses to hard-to-reach locations, bridge policy gaps to ensure that people without health coverage can be supported, and ensure that vaccination schedules can be completed even in cases of continued movement of individuals.

Republic of Moldova

Through a human-centred design process with close involvement of the Ukrainian community and state stakeholders, IOM has worked towards increasing vaccine confidence, demand, and uptake as well as improving access to prevention and vaccination services. Ukrainian refugees, migrants, and asylum seekers in refugee accommodation centres (RACs) and communities, particularly women, unaccompanied children, the elderly, and persons with disabilities or with critical medical conditions were targeted with information campaigns. With the support of the 13 Vaccine Ambassadors, Ukrainian women acting as peers in their communities, three awareness raising campaigns were organized in 2023.

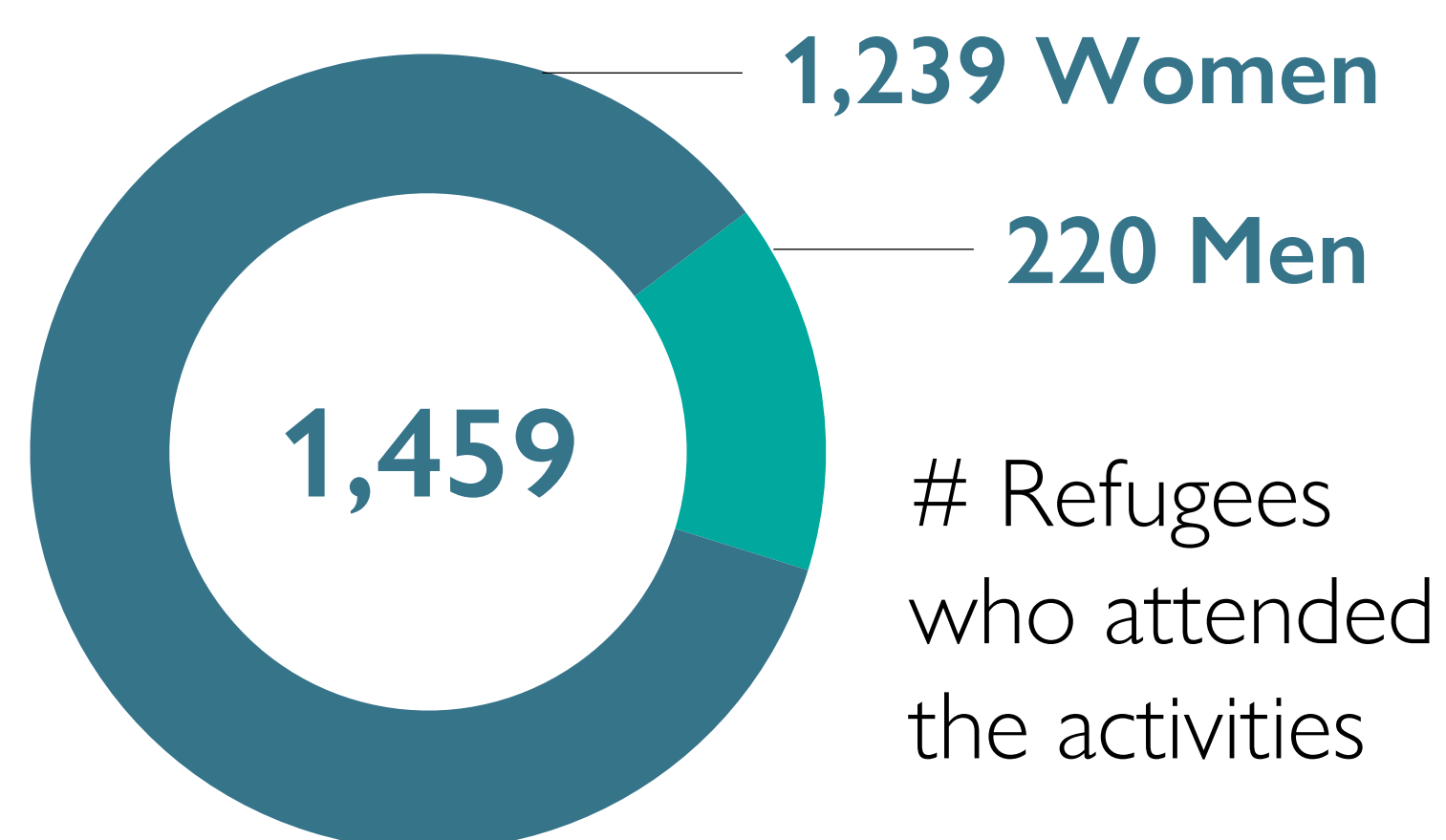
 **52**
Focus group discussions

 **131**
In-depth interviews

 **39**
Interviews on impactful stories and experiences related to vaccination

 **78**
Educational sessions for refugees

 **65**
Group discussions and 16 group activities



The project created an opening to raise further visibility on migration particularly related to Ukrainian refugees, therefore, refugees and migrants have been included in the National Vaccination Programme. The project also contributed to building stronger ties between IOM and the National Public Health Agency, based on mutual understanding and strategies for addressing challenges and priorities stemming from the international commitments of Republic of Moldova.



Health Support for Irregular Migrants

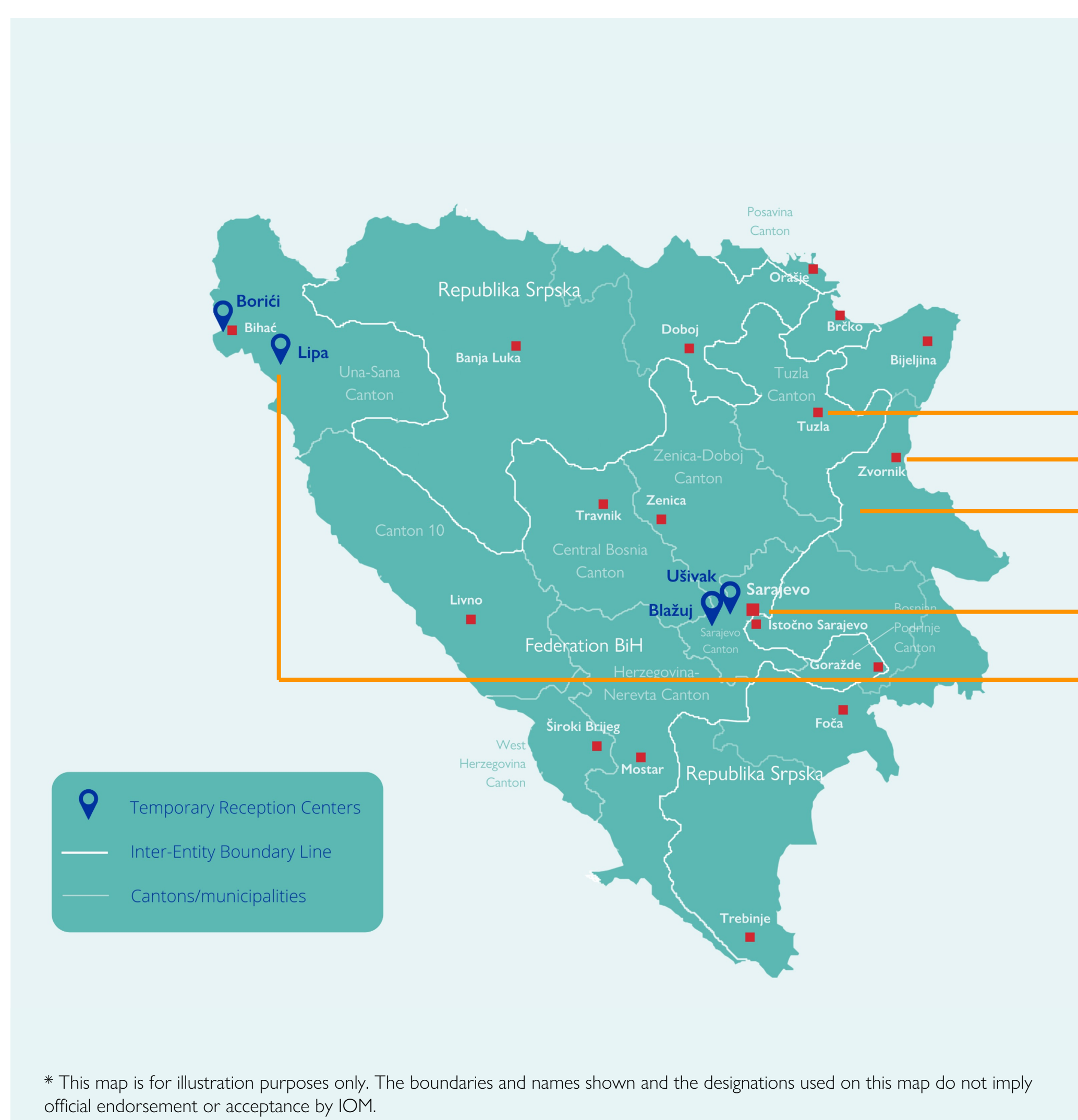
Since 2015, the Western Balkans has become the main transit region for migrants seeking to reach Western Europe. In 2023, a total of 163,521 apprehensions/registrations of migrants and refugees have been documented in the Western Balkan region. These individuals mainly originate from Afghanistan, Morocco, Pakistan, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Republic of Türkiye, and Bangladesh. IOM is committed to providing medical services to migrants in the Western Balkans through the backing of medical teams, closely monitoring migrants' health and well-being, and providing timely and adequate medical treatments and hospital referrals.



* This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM.
* Reference to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of United Nations Security Council resolution 1244(1999).

Main travel routes within the Western Balkans

Bosnia and Herzegovina



The provision of grants for small rehabilitation and refurbishment projects to local health and welfare service providers in Bosnia and Herzegovina aims to strengthen available assistance in communities most impacted by mixed migration flows. These projects include construction work such as the replacement of windows and doors in the health-care centre in Tuzla, the construction of the facade at the health-care centre in Zvornik, and carpentry reconstruction at the health-care centre in Vlasenica.

Responding to the needs of migrants, refugees, and asylum-seekers in Bosnia and Herzegovina, particularly in Sarajevo Canton (SC) and Una Sana Canton (USC), requires a holistic approach that targets the specific health-seeking behaviour of the population on the move.

- Through its implementing partner Danish Refugee Council (DRC), IOM continued engaging the institutional capacities (local Primary Health Centres and Cantonal Hospitals/University Clinics) in the response, while ensuring the continuity and quality of health-care assistance to the mixed migrant population regardless of their migration status and country of origin, all in line with relevant international and EU standards.
- On-site primary health-care services (inside TRCs infirmary) are ensured through the deployment of medical teams. When it comes to specialized and emergency healthcare, that is not available inside TRCs (specialist examination, diagnostic and other procedures, hospitalization, etc.), through bilateral agreements with healthcare institutions (primary, secondary and tertiary healthcare facilities), IOM implementing partner ensures access for migrants in need, accommodated inside TRCs, as per referral of medical team.

IOM has partnered with USC and SC Public Health Institutes to address epidemiological-hygienic surveillance with the aim to support activities of cantonal epidemiological service authorities in preventing, detecting, and suppressing in compliance with the sanitary-epidemiological welfare laws to protect health of migrants accommodated in four TRCs across the country (TRC Lipa, TRC Borići, TRC Blažuj, TRC Ušivak) but also to contribute to general population health in two Cantons.

26,949 # primary health-care consultations

700 # specialized medical consultations

3,036 # community based MHPSS services

10 # hygienic-epidemiological reports developed by the Una Sana Canton Public Health Institute*

*Being used to inform camp management decisions on policies and programmes in areas relevant to general hygiene but also major medical conditions of the migrants in TRCs

IOM advocates for the transition of health services for migrants to state institutions and continued with meetings and a dialogue with the key stakeholders including the Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) Ministry of Security, the BiH Ministry of Civil Affairs, Federation of BiH Ministry of Health, USC and SC cantonal governments and health ministries, and public health institutes.

MHPSS

IOM aimed to increase access to protection services and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) for migrants and asylum seekers assisted in BiH, support early screenings, and vulnerability assessments upon arrival in TRCs, and provide access to rights, information, and protection-sensitive assistance.

As part of the protection assistance available in temporary reception centres (TRCs), vulnerable persons had access to various forms of MHPSS services (e.g., art therapy, focus group discussions, gardening, music, community meeting) and community-based activities to foster inclusion and meaningful participation in TRC governance. To further improve protection capacities and coordination, participatory assessments and focus group discussions were organized to collect feedback on reception services, assistance and infrastructures, and actively involve migrants in the search of solutions to the challenges experienced in the TRCs.



North Macedonia

IOM North Macedonia, in close cooperation with the Ministry of Health, ensures the availability of primary health-care services for migrants accommodated at the temporary transit centres (TTCs) in Gevgelija and Tabanovce. IOM supports the work of two medical teams, consisting of a doctor and nurse, based at the established primary health-care units in the TTCs. The medical teams provide primary medical services on a full-time basis, including medical screening for each new arrival, health assessment, adequate medical treatments and healthcare, and referrals to hospitals.

In coordination with the Ministry of Health, regular measures to prevent the possible outbreak and spread of infectious diseases, including COVID-19, epidemiological surveillance, application of fumigants and control of drinking water, are operationalized by the Institute for Public Health epidemiologists.



The provision of medical assistance and perseverance of the well-being of migrants are of key importance to IOM

4,179
Primary health-care consultations

403
Care referrals

2
Points of entry supported

4
Health awareness sessions

Health Support for Irregular Migrants

Medical training on Advanced Life Support techniques for medical staff

The IOM medical doctors and nurses working in the TTCs in Tabanovci and Gevgelija enhanced their knowledge on Advanced Life Support techniques in a two-day training in December 2023.

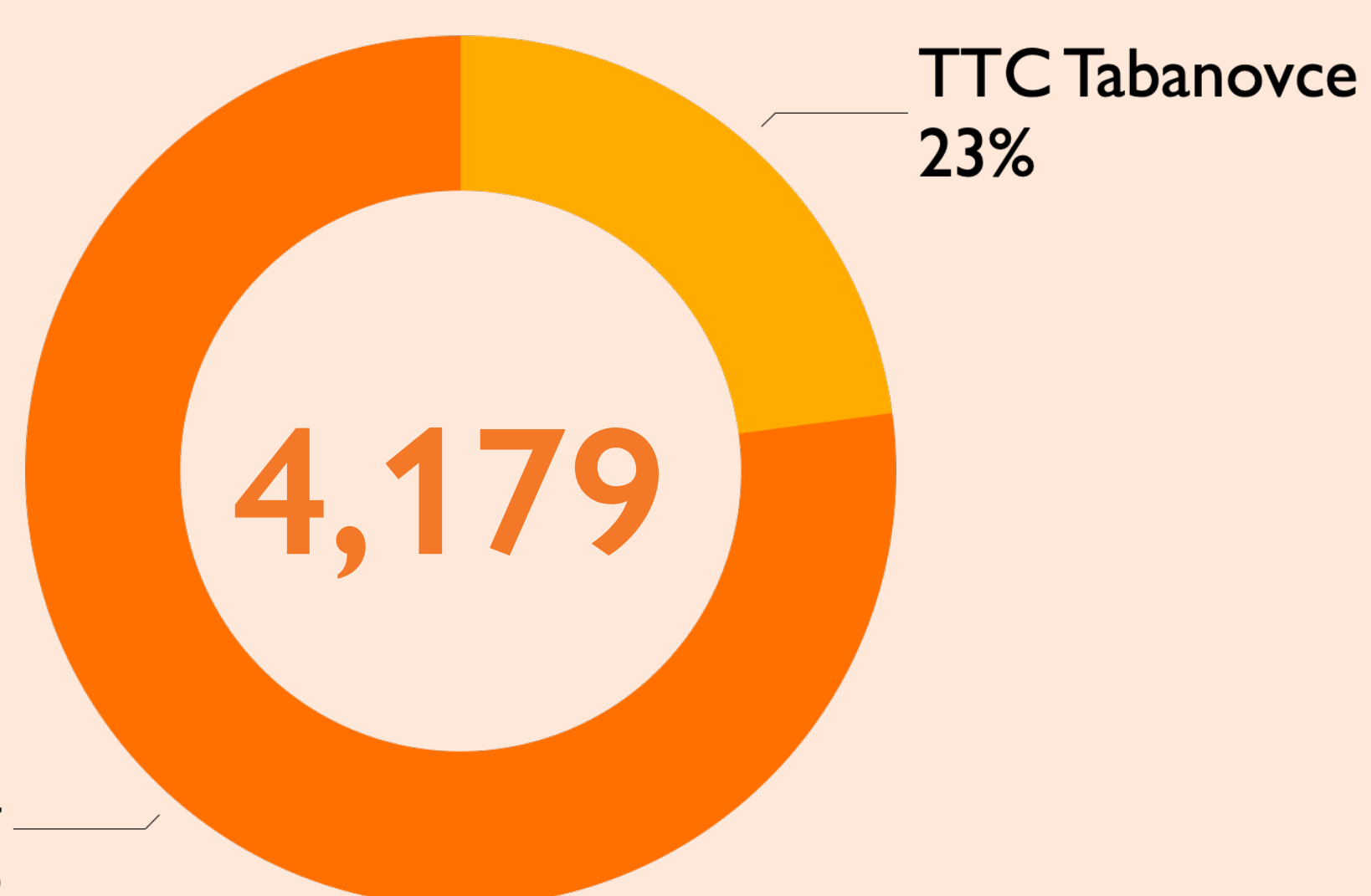
The simulations were carried out by experienced and certified educators, delving into crucial subjects, such as cardiopulmonary resuscitation/reanimation upon cardiac arrest, the adept use of automatic defibrillator devices, handling specialized medical equipment, delivering first aid for severe trauma and other life-threatening situations.



Cancer Prevention Awareness Session for Migrants

In December 2023, IOM raised the awareness on cancer among the migrants and refugees temporarily accommodated in the TTC Gevgelija, as well as for the staff engaged in the centre.

The awareness raising session conducted by an IOM medical doctor entailed the fundamentals of the most prevalent cancers, such as breast and colorectal cancer, and emphasized the symptoms, causes, diagnostics, available treatments and prevention. IOM provided practical instructions on conducting self-examinations and relevant video materials for the female and male migrants, ensuring their comprehensive understanding of the subject matter.



Share of migrants and refugees who received medical assistance in 2023, by TTC

2 # Medical Teams

357 # Migrants provided with transportation

403 # Migrants supported with the expenses for hospital treatment and hospitalization services

Regular monitoring of the provision of healthcare services to migrants were conducted by the secondary and tertiary health public facilities in cooperation with the Ministry of Health.

Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244)

IOM Kosovo continues to support the migrant response in the Western Balkans. With the opening of the Temporary Reception Centre for Migrants, among other services, IOM Kosovo has provided medical services to 450 migrants (starting from late 2022 until November 2023). The medical team appointed a physician and a nurse and was responsible for visiting the reception every day and/or based on new arrivals. The medical team made assessments of migrants' health and performed medical screenings, conducted primary health-care consultations for migrants and proper evaluations all provided according to the approved treatment protocol of WHO.

Moreover, they prescribed medication as per national guidelines, monitored migrants' health and well-being in the TRC and provided therapy upon request. For beneficiaries in IOM's Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programme, the medical team has provided fit-to-travel prior to departure.

Most of the migrants in the country are from the Middle East and IOM TRC Staff has provided interpretation services in Arabic and/or other languages as needed to facilitate the process and provide accurate migrants' concerns to the medical staff.

Primary health-care consultations	340
Care referrals	5
Health awareness sessions	10

Paving the Way to Universal Health Coverage

Universal Health Coverage (UHC) is a key aim of the 2030 Agenda, based on the principle that everyone and everywhere has access to quality essential health services. Through policy efforts, public and private advocacy, and strong partnerships at all levels, IOM has been a key voice for the advancement of health-related aspects of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including Goal 3 Target 8 to achieve UHC by 2030.

Republic of Moldova

Until recently the Republic of Moldova has been a major country of origin of migrant workers heading towards European Union (EU) countries, and there has only been a comparable small group of international migrants residing in the country, with an even smaller group of people in irregular situations and stateless persons. Since 24 February 2022, this situation has been changing drastically, with many Ukrainians displaced and now residing in the territory of the Republic of Moldova. So far, little attention has been paid to the health dimensions of migration for foreign nationals. Foreigners who have work permits are covered by the Moldovan National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) and all people with a regular stay can apply for the NHIS. Formally Moldovan legislation contains no restriction on the rights and opportunities of foreigners residing on the territory, except their political rights. At the same time, de facto, foreigners do not have equal access to health services as nationals, such as access to long-term treatment for tuberculosis or cancer. Another gap exists for irregular migrants, stateless persons and asylum seekers, several thousand persons in total, as they cannot access the NHIC and hence face difficulties in accessing health services.

In February 2023, IOM Moldova, the Ministry of Health (MoH), the National Health Insurance Company (NHIC), and the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) held a working meeting to set up an implementation team and a work plan. The IOM project team supported the establishment of the project Steering Committee (SC) to oversee the major programmatic decisions and assess the risks to the implementation of the different project elements and provided the platform.

The SC meeting took place on 31 March 2023 in a hybrid format. The main purpose of the meeting was to introduce the project activities to the key actors and other relevant stakeholders, and jointly coordinate the implementation and to discuss progress of the activities in the first project phase.

Following the SC, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between IOM and the Ministry of Health in July 2023. The MoU creates a more solid basis for future cooperation in different areas related to migrants' health.



First Steering Committee meeting on 31 March 2023

The signing of the MoU between the IOM Chief of Mission, Lars Lönnback and the Minister of Health, Ala Nemerenco



The feasibility study for including international migrants in the National Health Insurance Scheme has been initiated in 2023. This comprises a qualitative study, as well as two assessments on the legal framework and financial coverage related to different groups of international migrants' access to health services.

Way Forward for 2024

IOM launched its global five-year strategic plan 2024-2029 aimed at delivering on the promise of safe, orderly, and regular migration while supporting the world's most vulnerable. The strategic plan sets out three overarching goals, which will guide our activities in 2024. In migration health, the key activities are:



Objective 1: Saving lives and protecting people on move

- Continue providing health assistance for displaced population in:
 - Ukraine and neighbouring countries
 - Armenia
 - Türkiye



Objective 2: Driving solutions to displacement

- Work on the nexus of climate change and health of migrants
- Address drivers of health-related migration



Objective 3: Facilitating pathways for regular migration

- Continue strengthening of health aspects of border management
- Address key communicable diseases such as HIV and tuberculosis
- Continue providing health assistance to irregular migrants in the Western Balkans
- Advocate for universal health coverage models to ensure continuity of care

IOM funding needs in South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia

USD 941M





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