# BELARUS

## Surveys with Migrants:
## Needs,
## Intentions & Protection Challenges

March - April 2023
Country Report & Data Analysis

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## KEY FINDINGS

- Top 5 countries of origin: Afghanistan (29%), Syrian Arab Republic (10%), Somalia (7%), Republic of Iraq (6%) and Eritrea (5%).

- Top reasons for leaving country of origin: economic reasons (31%), personal/targeted violence (24%), war/conflict (21%), and education or training (16%).

- Top intended country of destination:* Belarus (33%), Germany (21%), Poland (9%), Russian Federation (6%), and Afghanistan (4%).

*\* at the moment of interview*

- Intention to return to country of origin: intend to return (22%), do not intend to return (47%), do not know (28%), prefer not to answer (3%)

- Top immediate needs:* financial support (40%), long-term accommodation (29%), food supply (25%), assistance with documentation (21%), short-term accommodation (16%).

- Top difficulties encountered in Belarus:* language barrier (73%), financial issues (48%), long-term housing (21%), arrest/detention (20%), and obtaining regular status (12%).

*\* more than one answer possible*

Map 1: Belarus, border crossing points, surveys deployed and locations



**Surveys: 202**
**Provinces: 7**

Men - 82%
Women - 18%

**Border of Entry**
- 82% - Russian Federation
- 13% - By flight
- 2% - Lithuania
- 3% - Other borders

**Interview location type**
- Medical Workers Office
- Detention Centre
- IOM Premise
- Other

**Number of interviews**
- 51 - 89
- 21 - 50
- 11 - 20
- 6 - 10
- 2 - 5

*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.*

## 1. Socio-Demographic Profile

### Nationality

This report focuses on migrants in heightened vulnerable situations present on the territory of Belarus, besides Ukrainian refugees[1].

As for the nationalities declared by respondents of this survey, overall, there were representatives of 40 different nationalities among respondents of the sample. The majority (29.2%) were nationals of Afghanistan. This was followed by nationals of the Syrian Arab Republic (10.3%), Somalia (7%), Republic of Iraq (6%), and Eritrea (5%). There were also nationals of India (4%), Yemen (4%), Comoros (3%), Iran (3%), Democratic Republic of the Congo (2.5%), Ethiopia (2.5%), Cameroon (2%), Palestine (2%) and Togo (1.5%).

There were also smaller shares of respondents from Burkina Faso, Bulgaria, Côte d'Ivoire, Ecuador, Egypt, Guinea, Liberia, Lithuania, Latvia, Nigeria, Cuba, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Gambia, Equatorial Guinea, Haiti, Lebanon, Sri Lanka, Mali, Netherlands, Poland, Sudan, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Chad and Tajikistan.

Figure 1: Top 5 nationalities declared by respondents (%)



| | |
|---|---|
| Afghanistan | 29.2% |
| Syrian Arab Republic | 10.3% |
| Somalia | 7.4% |
| Republic of Iraq | 6% |
| Eritrea | 5% |
| Others | 42.1% |

### Country of origin

When asked about the country of origin, top five countries remain the same as for the nationalities declared: Afghanistan (29%), Syrian Arab Republic (9%), Somalia (7%), Republic of Iraq (6%) and Eritrea (4.5%).

Nevertheless, it is crucial to note that for 5 per cent of the respondents their country of origin differed from their nationality declared at the moment of the interview.

For instance, there were nationals of Palestinian Territories who were originating from Lebanon and also nationals of the Syrian Arab Republic whose countries of origin were Lebanon and Egypt.

### Gender and age

Out of the 202 interviewed respondents, men represent the vast majority of the sample (82%), followed by women (18%). The average age of respondents was 31, with the youngest respondent being 18 years old and the oldest respondent being 72 years old.

The most common age group of respondents was 18-29 years old (57% of the sample). Twenty-eight per cent of respondents were at the age of 30-39 years

This was followed by the age group 40-49 (7%), 50-59 (6%) and 60 years and above (2%).

When looking at the data disaggregated by gender and age, men and women were almost equally represented in age groups 18-29 and 30-39 years old. While in age groups 40-49, 50-59 and 60 years and above there were more women than men.

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[1] Ukrainian refugees are the focus of a separate report: *"Belarus. Surveys with Refugees from Ukraine: Needs, Intentions, and Integration Challenges".*

Figure 2: Age, by gender (%)
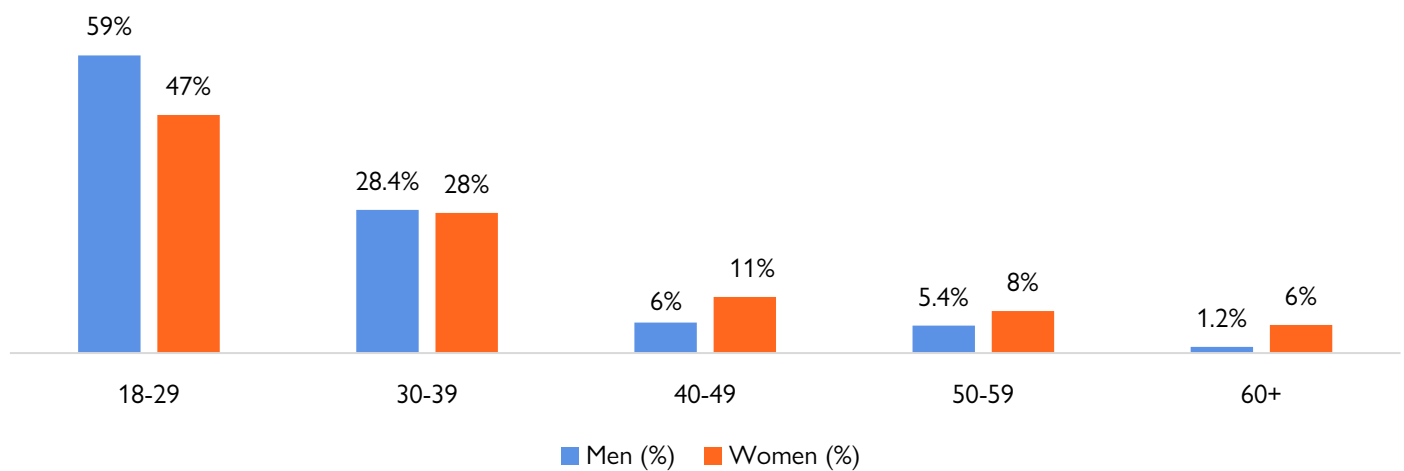


**Marital status**

Most of the respondents declared they were single (61.5%). Thirty-three per cent were married, followed by 3 per cent in civil partnership, 1 per cent widowed and 0.5 per cent divorced. One per cent preferred not to answer.

The share of single respondents was higher among men than among women (66% versus 38.8%).

Thirty-two per cent of the respondents have children, while 68 per cent have no children. Among those who reported having children, 53 per cent declared at least one child was in the country of origin, 41 per cent had children traveling with them, 3 per cent had children in destination country, while other 3 per cent declared their children were in other countries.

Figure 3: Marital status, by gender and total (%)
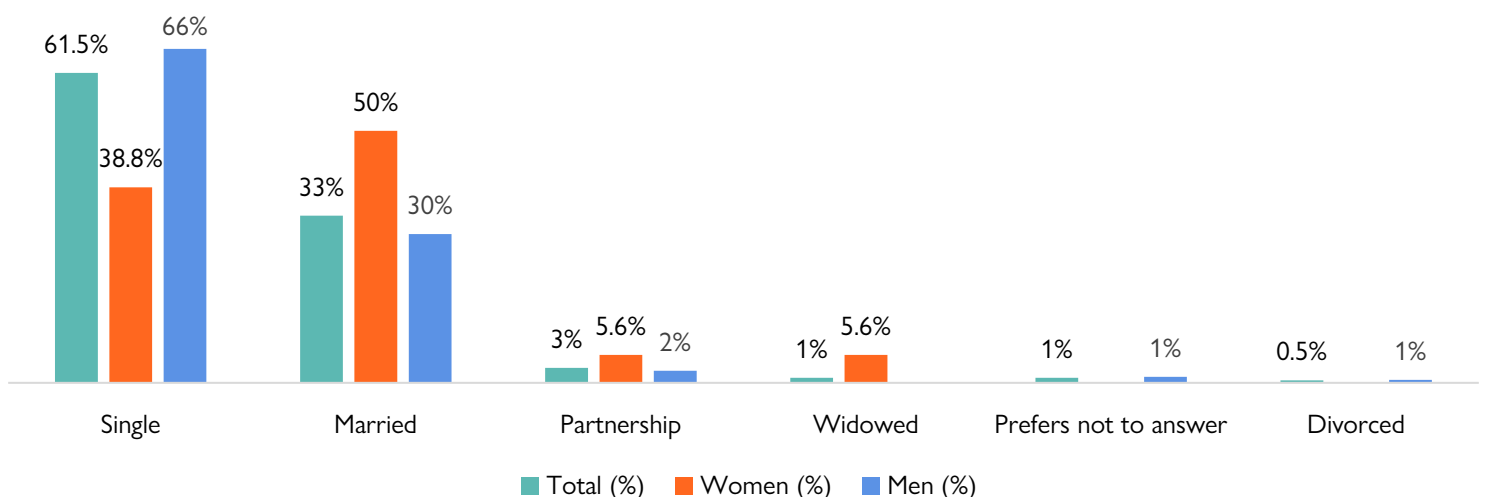


**Documents possessed at the time of interview**

Most of the respondents have their biometric passports with them (54%). This was followed by those who had non-biometric passports (18%), ID cards (12%), birth certificates (5%), travel documents (4%). Some of respondents (4%) travelled with

education certificates, driver licenses (1%) and certificates of identity verification or national emergency certificates (5%).

Thirteen per cent of the respondents travelled with no official document with them.

## 2. Education and Employment

### Main spoken language

When asked on the main language they use at home, 29 per cent of respondents indicated Arabic. Sixteen per cent named Farsi and another 16 per cent named French as their main language spoken at home. Another 11.5 per cent of respondents indicated Pashto and 5 per cent indicated Somalian as the languages they speak at home.

This was followed by Hindi (4%), English (3.5%), Russian (3%) and Dari (2.5%).

Among other main spoken languages respondents also named Tamari, Lingala, Krio, Tigrinya, Spanish, Polish, Azeri, and Latvian.

Figure 4: Top 5 spoken languages (%)
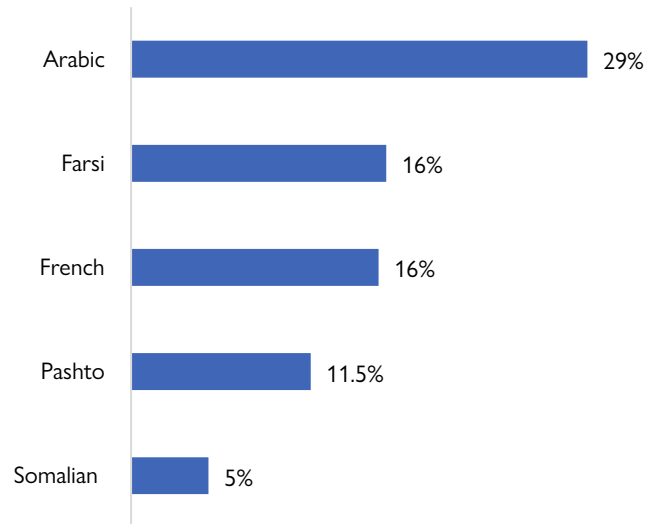


### Other spoken language(s)

Figure 5: Top 5 other spoken languages (%)
(more than one answer possible)
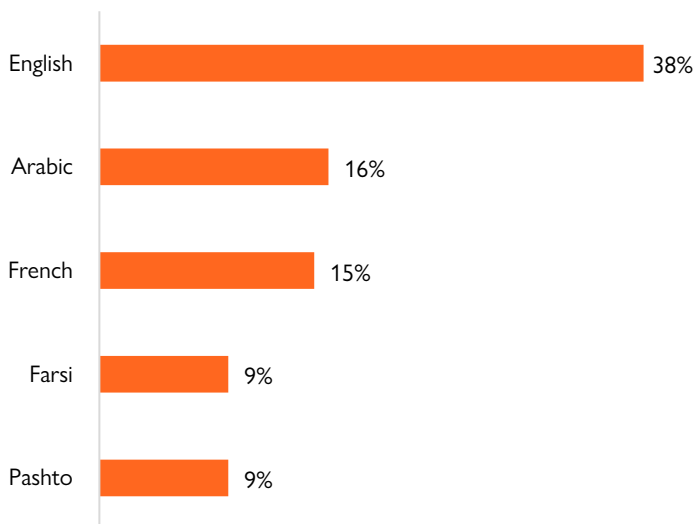


When asked on other languages spoken by respondents, 38 per cent stated that they speak English. Sixteen per cent speak Arabic and 15 per cent speak French. This was followed by those who speak Farsi (9%), Pashto (9%), Urdu (5%), Russian (5%) and Spanish (1%).

Among other languages spoken by respondents there were also Urhobo, Dari, Hindi, German, Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish, Turkish and Ukrainian.

Eight per cent of respondents did not speak any other language.

### Education level

The largest part of the respondents reported having completed lower secondary education (62%). Sixteen per cent have tertiary education, 12 per cent reported having completed upper secondary level of education, while 6 per cent have only primary education. Two per cent have pos-secondary education, while less than one per cent declared having completed religious school or to have other type of non-formal education. One per cent reported having no formal education and only women were among these respondents.

Figure 6: Education level, by gender and total (%)



Legend: Total (%), Women (%), Men (%)
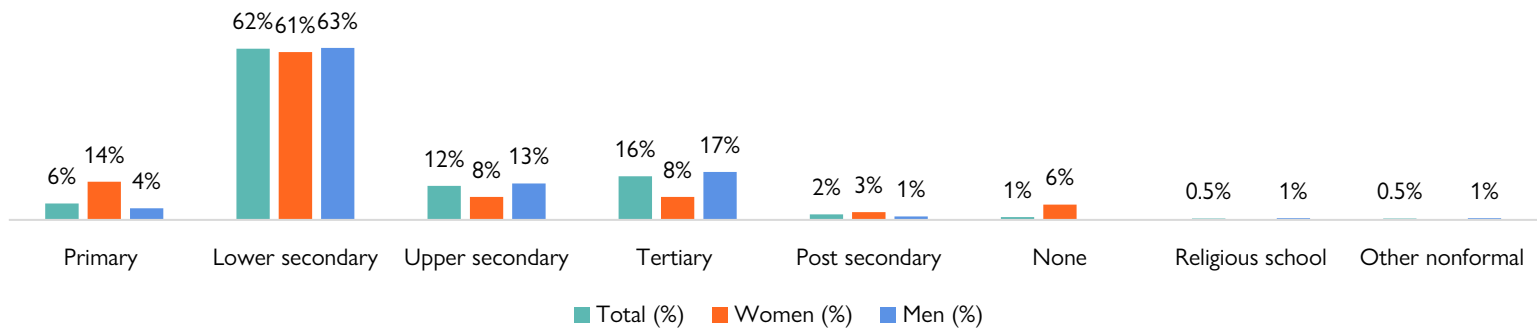
## Employment status before leaving the country of origin

Twenty-nine per cent of respondents were students before leaving their country of origin. This was followed by 20 per cent of the respondents who were unemployed and not looking for a job. There were three times as many women in this category than men (47% versus 14.5%).

Sixteen per cent were employed, followed by 13 per cent who were self-employed and 13 per cent who were unemployed and looking for a job. Four per cent were daily workers and 2 per cent were retired. Three per cent of respondents did not know or preferred not to answer.

Figure 7: Employment status before leaving country of origin, by gender and total (%)



Legend: Total (%), Women (%), Men (%)

Out of the respondents who were employed, self employed or daily workers before leaving their countries of origin (N=66), 29 per cent were working in services and sales, 15 per cent had occupations of technicians and associate professionals and 9 per cent were occupied in craft and related trades.

This was followed by respondents with elementary occupations (cleaners, street vendors) (9%), managers (9%), clerical support workers (8%), professionals (lawyers, teachers, doctors) (6%) and members of armed forces (4.5%). There were also plant and machine operators and assemblers (4.5%), skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers (3%) and entrepreneurs and business owners (3%).

Figure 8: Top 5 occupations before leaving the country of origin (%) N=66

## 3. Displacement patterns

### Reasons for leaving country of origin

All respondents were also asked to name two main reasons why they left their countries of origin. Almost a third of the respondents (31.2%) named economic reasons as their primary reason for leaving countries of origin. They were looking for jobs or other livelihood opportunities.

It was followed by 24 per cent who said they left their countries of origin because of personal or targeted violence. Out of those who named this reason, majority (73.5%) were nationals of Afghanistan who mentioned danger and threats to life due to persecutions by the Taliban regime in the country.

Another 21 per cent left due to war or conflict in country of origin.

When looking at the data disaggregated by gender, female respondents were more likely to leave their countries of origin due to personal or targeted violence than men (33% versus 22%), while there were twice as many men in the sample who left countries of origin due to war or conflict than there were women (23% versus 11%).

When reporting the second main reason why respondents left their countries of origin, 41 per cent replied that it was for economic reasons, 16 per cent named education or trainings, 14 per cent named marriage, family reunification or family formation, 8 per cent reported war or conflict and 6 per sent named limited access to services. Eleven per cent named other personal reasons, while the following reasons were also named by 1 per cent of the respondents each: to avoid military conflict, COVID-19 related reasons, personal or targeted violence and sudden onset of natural disaster (flood, storm, landslide, earthquake).

Figure 9: Respondents' first reason for leaving country of origin, by gender and total (%)
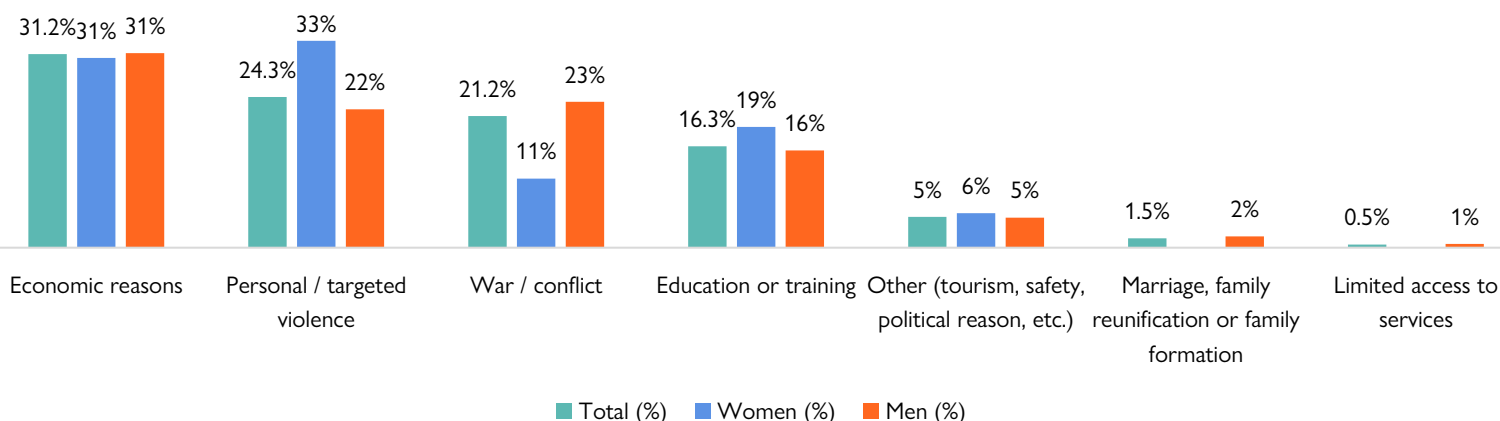


### Reasons for leaving the country of departure

Sixteen per cent of respondents spent one year or more in a country different than that of origin, before moving again.

Among them, sixty per cent reported economic reasons for leaving departure country, 16 per cent named pursuing education or trainings, 9 per cent named war or conflict and 6 per cent reported personal or targeted violence.

Nine per cent also reported other reasons such as personal issues, safety concerns or seeking new life opportunities.

Figure 10: Respondents' first reason for leaving departure country (%) N=32

## Average time spent since initial displacement

Forty-six per cent of respondents were initially displaced in 2023. Forty-eight per cent were initially displaced in 2022. The remaining 6 per cent started their journey before 2022.

The approximate duration of displacement of respondents was assessed by looking at the difference between respondents' initial date of displacement and the date of interview. The table below shows the distribution among respondents.

By the time the interview was conducted (March-April 2023), twenty-six per cent of respondents had spent less than one month in displacement. This was followed by 12 per cent who had spent one month in displacement and another 12 per cent who had spent 3 months in displacement. There were also 11 per cent of respondents who had spent over 1 year in displacement by the time of the interview.

Table 1: Approximate time spent in displacement until date of interview (%)

| Approximate time spent in displacement until date of interview | Total (%) |
|---|---|
| Less than 1 Month | 26% |
| 1 Month | 12% |
| 2 Months | 8% |
| 3 Months | 12% |
| 4 Months | 7% |
| 5 Months | 7% |
| 6 Months | 5% |
| 7 Months | 4% |
| 8 Months | 2% |
| 9 Months | 1.5% |
| 10 Months | 1.5% |
| 11 Months | 1% |
| 12 Months | 2% |
| Over 12 Months | 11% |

## Assistance in organizing journey

When asked about whether anyone helped respondents in organizing their journeys, 61 per cent replied that no one helped them, 31 per cent confirmed they were assisted, and the remaining 8 per cent preferred not to answer.

Out of those who were assisted, 95 per cent received

assistance from a private individual or a private recruitment agency, 19 per cent were assisted by a friend, family member or community member back at home. Two per cent reported assistance from other sources, and other 2 per cent preferred not to clarify who helped them in organizing their journey.

Figure 12: Sources of assistance in organizing journey (%) N=62



| A private individual / a private recruitment agency | Friend / family member / community member back at home | Other sources | Prefers not to answer |
|---|---|---|---|
| 95% | 19% | 2% | 2% |

## 4. Group Composition

### Travel mode

Sixty-two per cent of the respondents travelled to Belarus in a group. The other 38 per cent were travelling by themselves.

On average, groups were composed of 7 persons, with maximum group size reaching 15 people.

Over half of the respondents (52%) were travelling with friends and neighbours. Twenty-one per cent were travelling with family members and fourteen per cent with other relatives. Five per cent indicated that they were travelling with facilitators (agents/employers/smugglers).

Twenty-six per cent were travelling with other people, mainly unknown to them, whom they met during their journey.

Figure 12: Travel mode by gender and total (%)
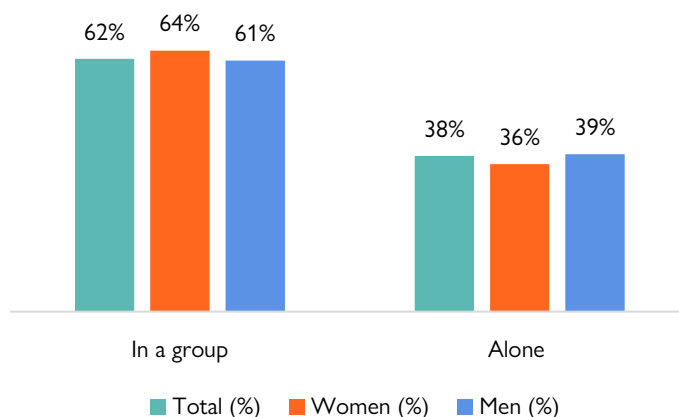


### Table 2: Travel groups composition, by gender and age

| Age and gender | Number | Total (%) |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 0-4 years - female | 12 | 1.3% |
| 0-4 years - male | 20 | 2.2% |
| 5-17 years - female | 34 | 4% |
| 5-17 years - male | 59 | 6% |
| Adults (18-59) - female | 110 | 12% |
| Adults (18-59) - male | 672 | 72.5% |
| Older (60+) - female | 10 | 1% |
| Older (60+) - male | 10 | 1% |

Thirty-one per cent were travelling with children, while the other 69 per cent were not accompanied by children.

Overall, there were 927 persons travelling as part of groups. Absolute majority of them were men at the age of 18-59 years old. (72.5%) Women of that age accounted for 12 per cent of travel groups.

One hundred and twenty-five children accompanied adults in groups. Ninety-three of them were at the age of 5-17 years old, while 32 were at the age 0-4 years old.

Older persons accounted only for 2 per cent of total group representatives, with equal number of female and male older persons.

### Travelling with persons with health conditions

Out of all respondents, 9.4 per cent answered that they or someone in their group had serious health conditions or specific needs, 77.2 per cent said they did not, while 13.4 per cent did not know or preferred not to answer.

Out of those who confirmed that they or someone in their group had serious health conditions or specific, needs, 8 respondents indicated that they or someone

in their group were with chronic disease or in need of medical treatment (diabetes, hypertension, arthritis obesity, cancer, etc.).

Other 8 respondents also indicated that they or someone in their group were wounded or injured. Four respondents reported they had pregnant or lactating women in their groups.

## 5. Intentions

### Most common migratory routes of respondents

By combining data on the Top 5 countries of origin, Top 5 transit countries and Top 5 intended destination countries, the most common reported migratory routes of respondents were projected.

As it can be seen from the map, most of the respondents started their journeys from Somalia, Eritrea, Syrian Arab Republic, Republic of Iraq, and Afghanistan, then transited through either Türkiye, Armenia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Uzbekistan or Russian Federation with the aim to reach either Belarus, Russian Federation, Poland, Germany or France.

It is also crucial to note that the Russian Federation was among the most common transit countries of respondents, as well as in top five of intended destination countries.

Map 2: Most common migratory routes of respondents (%)
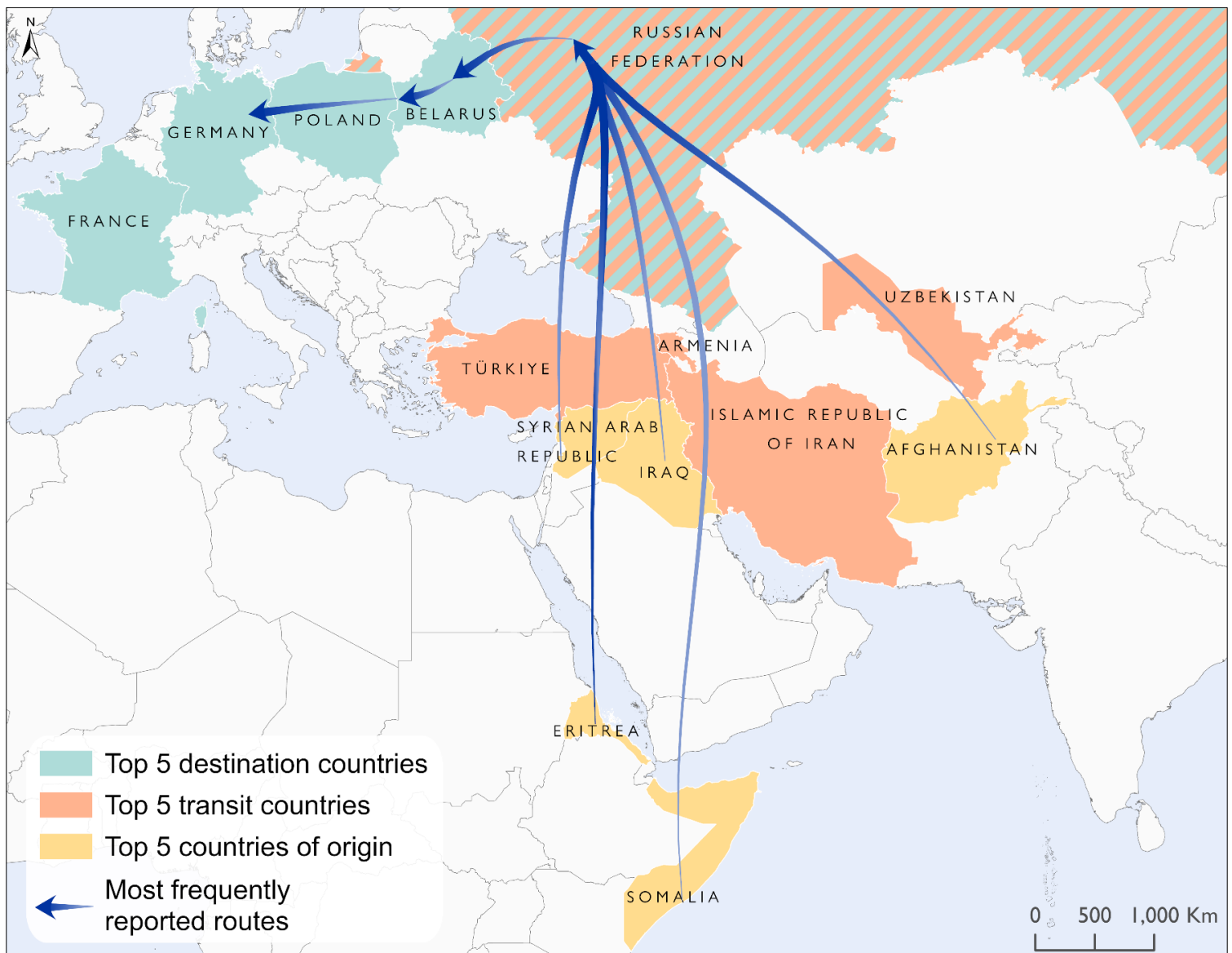


*This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown, and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM.*

## Transit countries and entry to Belarus

On average, respondents have crossed at least one transit country on their way to Belarus by the time of the interview. Maximum number of transit countries crossed by some of the respondents was five.

Among the most common transit countries respondents named Russian Federation (56%), Islamic Republic of Iran (15.5%), Türkiye (7%), Armenia (3%), Uzbekistan (3%), Pakistan (2.5%), United Arab Emirates (2%), Tajikistan (2%), Egypt (1.7%) and Poland (1.7%).

There were also smaller shares of respondents who transited through such countries as Ethiopia, Lebanon, Albania, Bulgaria, Ghana, Guinea, Lithuania, Senegal and Republic of Moldova.

As for the country of entry to Belarus, 82 per cent of respondents entered Belarus from the Russian Federation. This was followed by 13 per cent who arrived by flight, 2 per cent entered Belarus from Lithuania, 1 per cent entered from Poland, and 1 per cent from Latvia. One per cent preferred not to answer this question.

The respondents were also asked on their next transit country after Belarus to reach their intended destination country. Out of those who provided their answers to this question (N=130), 56.9 per cent reported Poland as their next transit country, 20.8 per cent indicated Russian Federation, 10 per cent reported Lithuania, 6.9 per cent said they would take flights from Belarus and 0.8 per cent indicated Latvia. The remaining 4.6 per cent said their next transit is unknown.

## Intended length of stay in current location

When asked on how long respondents considered staying in Belarus, half of the respondents (50.5%) did not know. Seventeen per cent intended to stay at least for 1 year, 15 per cent from one week to less than one month, and 10 per cent intended to stay less than a week. Another 3.5 per cent planned to stay in Belarus from one to three months, 2 per cent from three to six months, and the remaining 2 per cent intended to stay in Belarus from six months to less than a year.

Figure 13: Intended length of stay in current location (%)
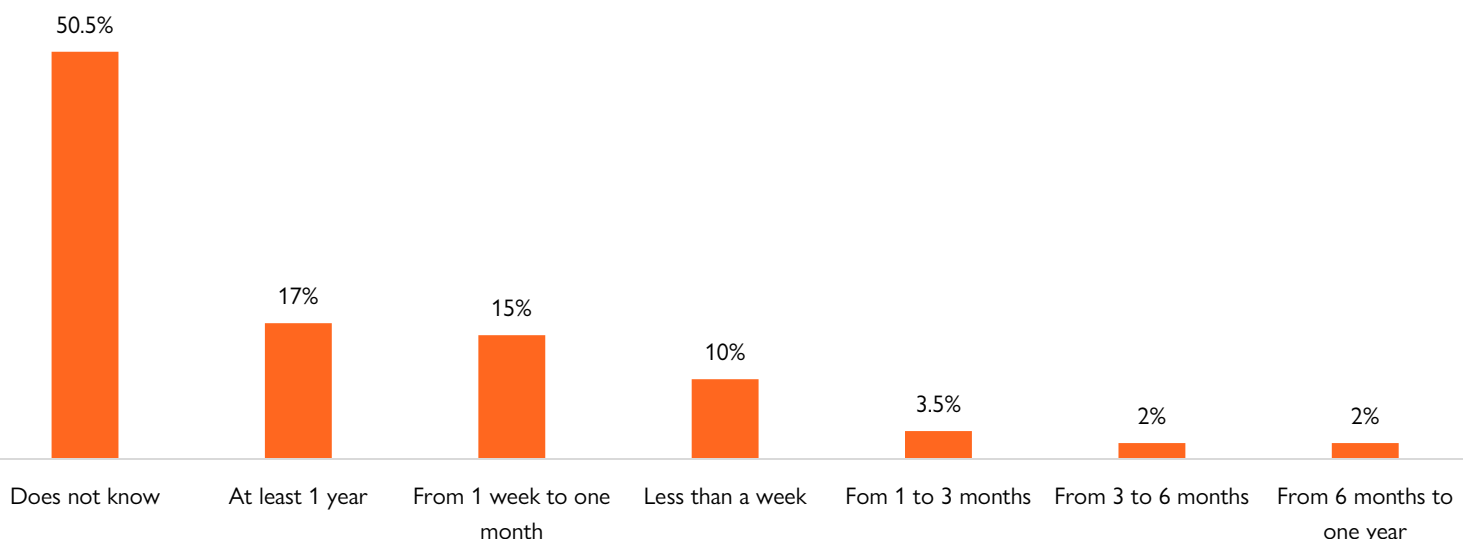


## Intended country of destination at departure

All the respondents were asked what was their intended destination country at the time of departure from the country of origin and what was their intended destination country at the moment of interview to see possible shifts depending on changes in conditions and information during the journey.

When asked on intended country of destination at departure, 42 per cent intended to go to Germany, 17 per cent to Belarus, 7 per cent to Russian Federation and another 7 per cent to Poland.

Among other most common intended destinations at departure the respondents also named France (4.5%), Lithuania (3%), United Kingdom (2.5%), Netherlands (2%), Italy (1.5%), Austria (1%), Belgium (1%), Denmark (1%), Spain (1%), and Sweden (1%).

It is also worth mentioning that 4.5 per cent of respondents indicated that they were willing to go to any safe country in Europe.
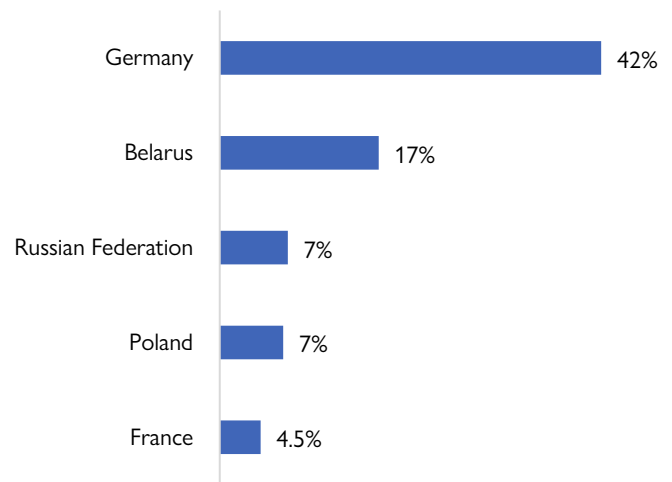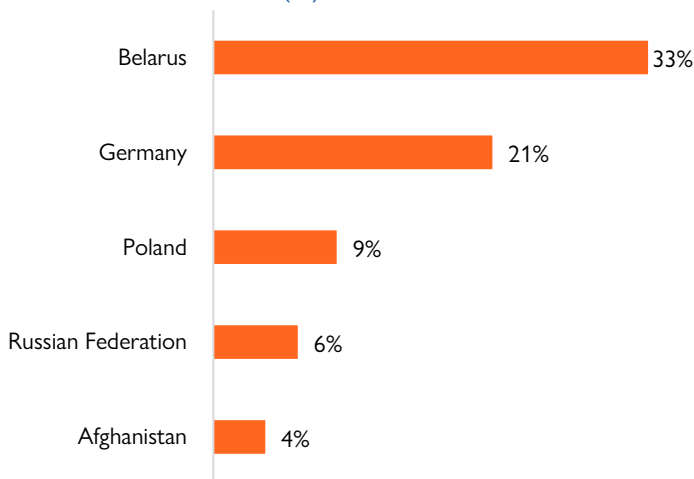
Only 0.5 per cent of respondents did not know at departure on their intended country of destination.

Figure 14: Top 5 intended countries of destination at departure (%) N=202



## Intended country of destination at the moment of interview

Figure 15: Top 5 intended countries destination at the moment of interview (%) N=202



When looking at intended countries of destination at the moment of interview, it can be seen that some of the respondents adapted their intentions given the situation or conditions they found in the current country. Thirty-three per cent of the respondents named Belarus as their intended country of destination, and only 21 per cent indicated Germany (in comparison to 42 per cent intending to move there at departure).

It can also be seen from the graph that some of the respondents expressed their intention to return to their home countries as they are not able to reach the initial intended destination: some reported Afghanistan (4%), Somalia (1%) and Syrian Arab Republic (1%) as their destination at the moment of interview.

## Reasons for choosing destination country

The survey also asked about reasons for choosing intended final destination countries. The most common reasons among the respondents were that they had nowhere else to go (24%), friends in the area (21%), accommodation or shelter there (20%), and family or relatives there (19%). Seventeen per cent selected their destination country because of appealing socio-economic conditions there and 13 per cent because of safety and personal security. Twelve per cent based their choice on ease of access to asylum procedures in intended destination countries.

Four per cent specified no particular reason for selecting their destination country.

As it can be seen from Table 3, top three reasons for choosing the destination country are the same for men and women in the sample – only available choice, friends in destination country, accommodation or shelter there. Women were twice as likely than men to base their choice on ease of access to asylum procedures (22% versus 10%), while more men chose their destination country based on proximity to border (13% versus 3%).

Table 3: Reasons for choosing intended destination country, by gender and total (%)
 *(more than one answer possible)*

| Listed reason | Women (%) | Men (%) | Total (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Nowhere else to go/ only available choice | 25% | 23% | 24% |
| Friends in the area | 28% | 20% | 21% |
| Accommodation/shelter there | 22% | 19% | 20% |
| Family/relatives in the area | 17% | 19% | 19% |
| Appealing socio-economic conditions | 17% | 17% | 17% |
| Safety and personal security | 14% | 13% | 13% |
| Ease of access to asylum procedures | 22% | 10% | 12% |
| Close to border | 3% | 13% | 11% |
| Well established network of co-nationals | 6% | 12% | 11% |
| Lived/studied/worked previously there | 11% | 9% | 9% |
| Education there | 8% | 7% | 7% |
| Other (deportation, higher standards of living, language) | 0% | 8% | 6% |
| Easier to find work | 3% | 5% | 5% |
| No specific reason | 0% | 5% | 4% |

## Intentions to settle in Belarus

Among those intending to remain in Belarus (N=67), 75 per cent were men, and 25 per cent were women. Most of the respondents that plan to stay in Belarus were at the age of 18-29 (37%) and 30-39 years old (37%). This was followed by 11 per cent at the age of 50-59, 9 per cent at the age of 40-49, and 6 per cent at the age of 60 and over.

Forty-six per cent of those intending to stay in Belarus were nationals of Afghanistan, 15 per cent – of the Syrian Arab Republic, 13.5 per cent – of the Republic of Iraq. Among others who intend to remain in Belarus there were also nationals of Somalia, Yemen, Eritrea, Bulgaria and other countries.

Sixty-six per cent of those intending to stay in Belarus were married, 30 per cent were single, 3 per cent widowed and 1 per cent in civil partnership.

Sixty-one per cent of the respondents planning to remain in Belarus had children, and in 49 per cent of cases children were accompanying their parents.

As for the highest level of education completed by the group of respondents, 50.7 per cent had lower secondary education and 22.4 per cent obtained tertiary education. This was followed by 16.4 per cent who had upper secondary education, 6 per cent with primary education, 1.5 per cent with post secondary education and only 3 per cent who did not complete any education.

Figure 16: Age of respondents intending to settle in Belarus, by gender (%)
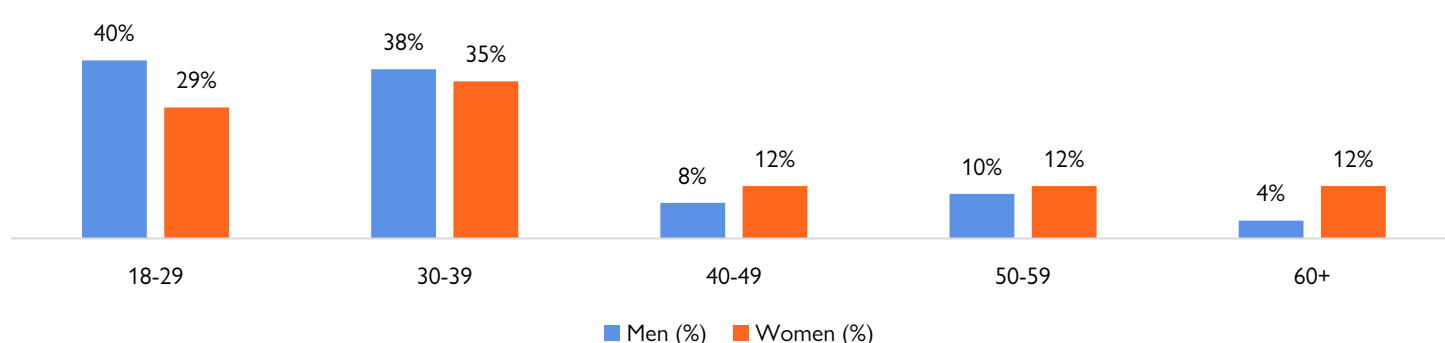
## Reason for choosing Belarus as destination country

Among reasons for choosing Belarus as their destination country, 57 per cent stated that it was the only available choice and they had nowhere else to go. Twenty-four per cent chose Belarus due to ease of access to asylum procedures, 16 per cent because of safety and personal security, and 15 per cent because they lived, studied or worked previously in Belarus.

Another 9 per cent selected Belarus because they had shelter or accommodation there, 6 per cent had family or relatives in the area, 6 per cent were studying in Belarus, 4 per cent had friends in the area, and the remaining 4 per cent based their choice on appealing socio-economic conditions.

Table 4: Reasons for choosing Belarus as destination country (%) N=67 *(more than one answer possible)*

| Listed reason | Total (%) |
|---|---|
| Nowhere else to go/ only available choice | 57% |
| Ease of access to asylum procedures | 24% |
| Safety and personal security | 16% |
| Lived/studied/worked previously there | 15% |
| Accommodation/shelter there | 9% |
| Family/relatives in the area | 6% |
| Education there | 6% |
| Friends in the area | 4% |
| Appealing socio-economic conditions | 4% |

## Estimates

All respondents were asked to provide an estimate on the number of migrants and refugees accommodated in their surrounding in Belarus.

As a result, the survey established the presence of an estimated number of 2,279 migrants (besides Ukrainian refugees[2]) in the covered locations in Belarus.

## Intentions to return to country of origin

Forty-seven per cent of the respondents did not plan to return to country of origin. When asked on reason for not planning to return, 74 per cent replied that due to security issues in the country of origin, 25 per cent were not willing to return, 11 per cent reported lack of livelihood in country of origin and another 11 per cent reported lack of assistance in place of origin.

Twenty-two per cent of the respondents said they planned to return to their countries of origin. When asked on reason why they planned to return to country of origin, among main reasons these respondents named to reunite with family members (44%), due to care responsibilities for family members (28%), accommodation there (23%), not enough money to cover living costs (19%), being tired and exhausted from current living conditions (19%).

Twenty-eight per cent did not know and three per cent preferred not to answer this question.

Figure 17: Intention to return to country of origin (%)



Yes, 22%
Does not know, 28%
Prefers not to answer, 3%
No, 47%
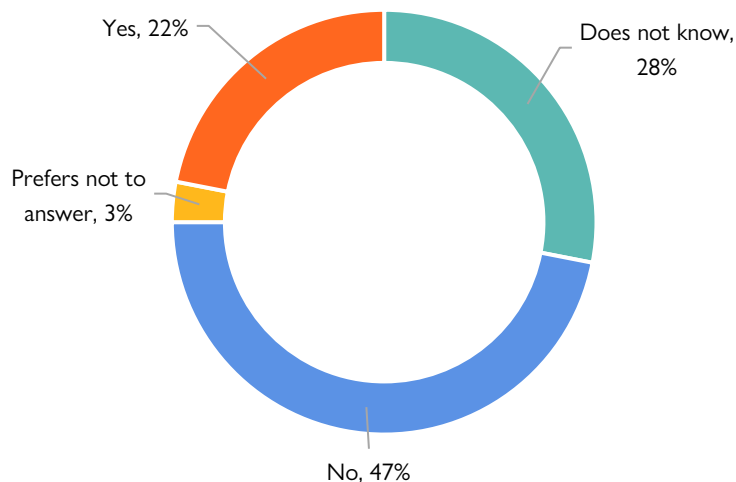
[2] *Estimated presence of Ukrainian refugees was provided in a separate report: "Belarus. Surveys with Refugees from Ukraine: Needs, Intentions, and Integration Challenges".*

## 6. Registration and Inclusion Services

### Current legal status

The survey asked about respondents' current legal status in Belarus. Thirty-nine per cent of respondents were without regular status in Belarus. Other 17 per cent selected other as they were either under non-refoulement, awaiting deportation or denied of refugee status in Belarus. Fourteen per cent had tourist visas, and 12.5 per cent had temporary stay.

Another 9 per cent had temporary residence in Belarus, 6 per cent had student visas and 1 per cent had permanent residence. The remaining 1.5 per cent did not know or preferred not to answer.

Gender distribution is almost equal among male and female respondents under each status with slightly more women possessing temporary stay than men (11% versus 2%), and only men possessing permanent residence.

Table 5: Current legal status (%)

| Current legal status in Belarus | Total (%) |
|---|---|
| Without regular status | 39% |
| Other (non-refoulement, deportation, denied of refugee status, etc.) | 17% |
| Tourist visa | 14% |
| Temporary stay | 12.5% |
| Temporary residence | 9% |
| Student visa | 6% |
| Does not know or preferred not to answer | 1.5% |
| Permanent residence | 1% |

### Applications for refugee status

Figure 18: Submitted applications for refugee status, additional protection or asylum (%)



Yes, 15%
Prefers not to answer, 2%
No, 83%
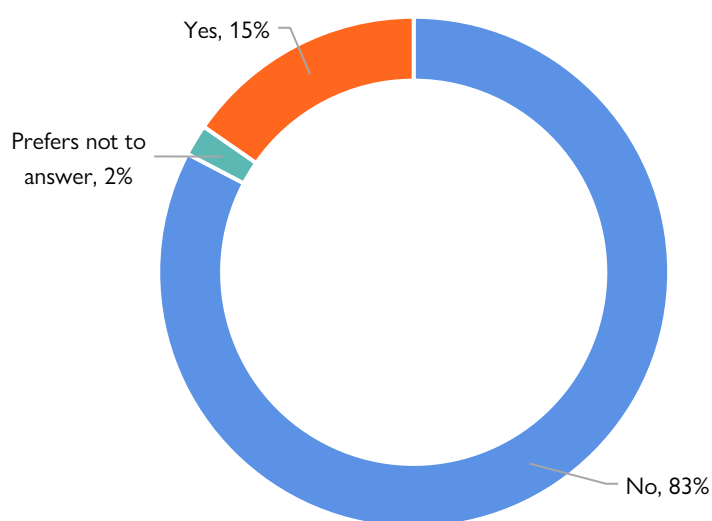
Only 15 per cent of respondents submitted applications for a refugee status, additional protection or asylum in Belarus by the time of the interview. Eighty-three per cent of respondents answered that they had not applied for a refugee status, additional protection or asylum in Belarus, while 2 per cent preferred not to answer.

Out of those who did not apply, almost half (49%) did not do that because they planned to leave Belarus soon, followed by 35 per cent who planned to submit their applications soon. Nine per cent did not plan to submit applications, while 5 per cent said that they had already submitted and were denied.

Only 1 per cent of those who had not applied yet said they did not know how and another 1 per cent said that they had not decided yet whether to submit applications.

## Accommodation in Belarus

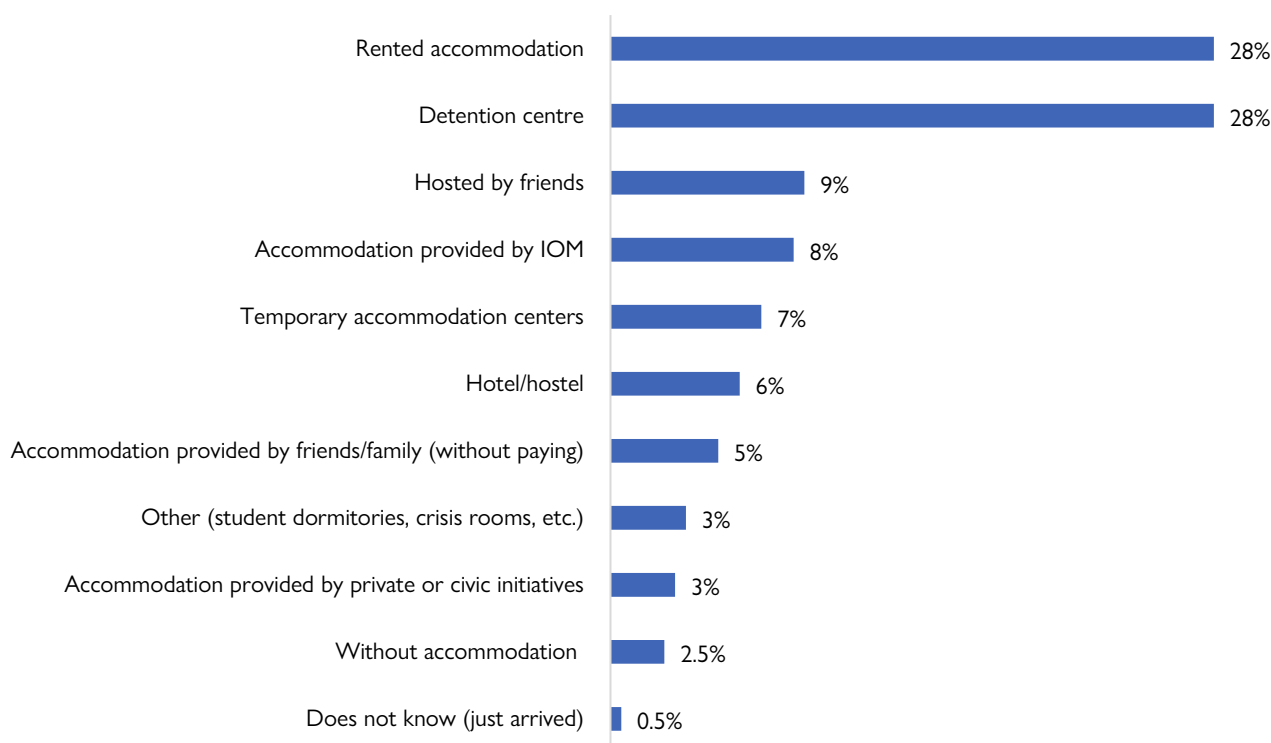All respondents of the survey were asked on their current accommodation in Belarus. Most of the respondents were either renting accommodation (28%) or were in detention centers (28%). Nine per cent were hosted by friends, 8 per cent were staying in accommodation provided by IOM, and 7 per cent of the sample were in temporary accommodation centers. Six per cent were staying in hotels, while five per cent indicated their accommodation was provided by friends or family members without paying. Out of all respondents 2.5 per cent indicated they did not have accommodation.

Figure 19: Current accommodation type of respondents (%)

| Accommodation type | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Rented accommodation | 28% |
| Detention centre | 28% |
| Hosted by friends | 9% |
| Accommodation provided by IOM | 8% |
| Temporary accommodation centers | 7% |
| Hotel/hostel | 6% |
| Accommodation provided by friends/family (without paying) | 5% |
| Other (student dormitories, crisis rooms, etc.) | 3% |
| Accommodation provided by private or civic initiatives | 3% |
| Without accommodation | 2.5% |
| Does not know (just arrived) | 0.5% |

## Access to healthcare

Forty per cent of respondents indicated that nothing was preventing them from accessing healthcare services in Belarus.

Twenty-five per cent replied that cost and lack of money prevented them from accessing healthcare services. Twenty-two per cent named language barrier as an obstacle, followed by 19 per cent who indicated lack of documents to access healthcare facilities.

Three per cent responded that there were no reachable health services and two per cent indicated other obstacles such as lack of information on where healthcare facilities were located and available services there. Twelve per cent did not know and five per cent preferred not to answer.

## Detention, deportation, penalty

When answering the question whether the respondent had a deportation order in Belarus, 38 per cent confirmed that had deportation orders. Sixty per cent said they did not have deportation orders. Two per cent preferred not to answer.

Respondents were also asked whether they had been detained in Belarus. Over third of respondents (35.5%) replied that they were detained in Belarus. Sixty-four per cent had not been detained, while 0.5 per cent preferred not to answer.

## Difficulties in Belarus

Three main difficulties encountered by respondents in Belarus where language barrier (73%), financial issues (48%) and long-term housing (21%).

These were followed by fear of potential arrest or detention (20%), difficulties in obtaining regular status in Belarus (12%), lack of employment (11%), deportation (6%), hunger (5%), access to services (3%), lack of information (3%) and other difficulties such as weather conditions, longing for family, uncertainty on what could happen next (2%).

Among other difficulties encountered in Belarus the respondents also indicated exposure to the elements/outdoors, recognition of professional skills, diplomas and university credits, discrimination, racism and personal security (1% each).

Two per cent of the respondents said they did not face any difficulties in Belarus. One per cent of the respondents preferred not to answer and one per cent also did not know.

Figure 20: Top 10 main difficulties encountered by respondents in Belarus (%)
*(more than one answer possible)*
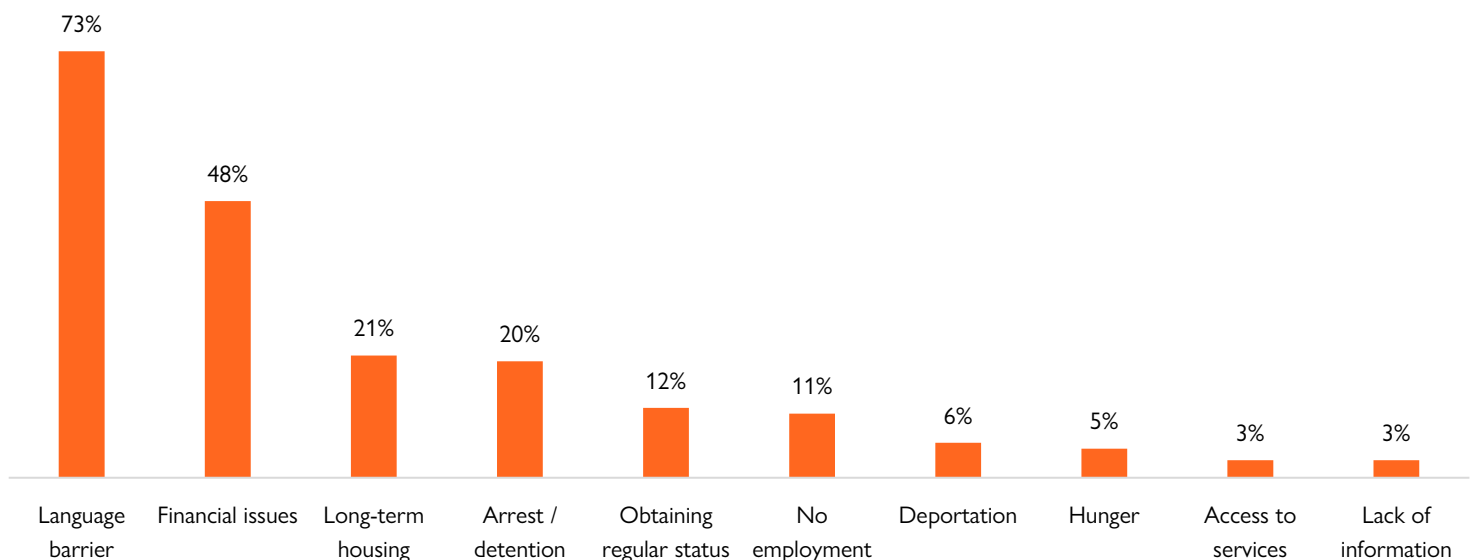


## 7. Needs and Information Channels

### Immediate needs

The most common immediate need experienced by respondents at the time of the interview was financial assistance (40%). This was followed by long-term accommodation (29%), food supply (25%), assistance with documents and registration (21%), short-term accommodation (16%), communication with other in the country of origin or elsewhere (14%), and clothes and shoes (12%).

Ten per cent also expressed immediate need in support to return home. Seven per cent also had need in means of telecommunication such as cell phones, sim cards, internet and other.

Six per cent also indicated need in health services, 5 per cent in vocational education for adults, and another 5 per cent stated need in legal assistance. Immediate needs in medicines and language courses were expressed by 4 per cent of respondents respectively.

Among other immediate need respondents also named household goods (3%), psychological counselling (2%), school enrolment for children (1%), family tracing (1%) and support with business setup (0.5%).

One per cent of respondents did not have any immediate need.

Figure 21: Top 10 immediate needs of respondents (%)
(*more than one answer possible*)

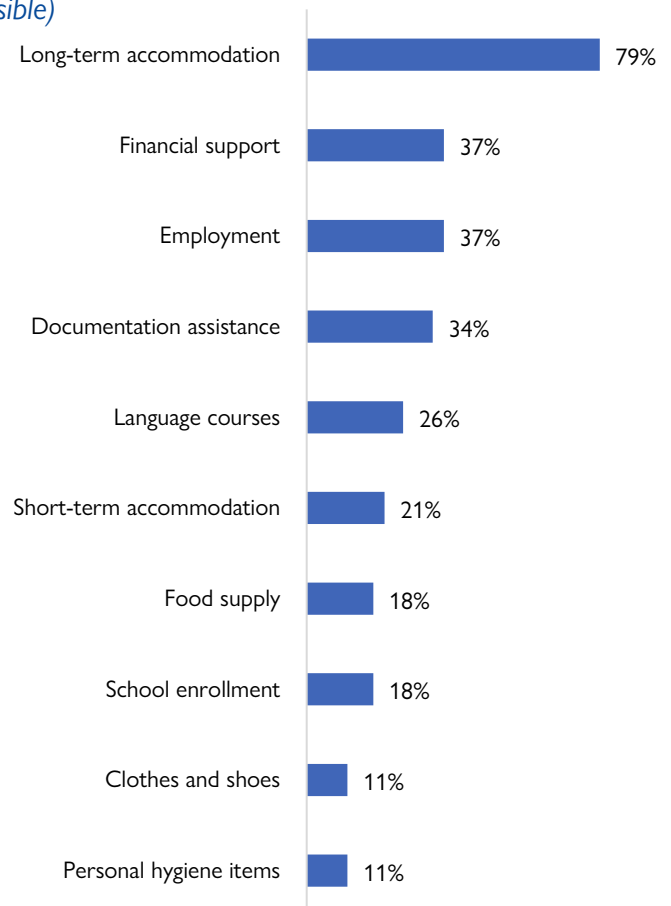| Need | % |
|---|---|
| Financial support | 40% |
| Long-term accommodation | 29% |
| Food supply | 25% |
| Documentation assistance | 21% |
| Short-term accommodation | 16% |
| Communication with others elsewhere | 14% |
| Clothes and shoes | 12% |
| Support to return home | 10% |
| General information | 9% |
| Employment | 9% |
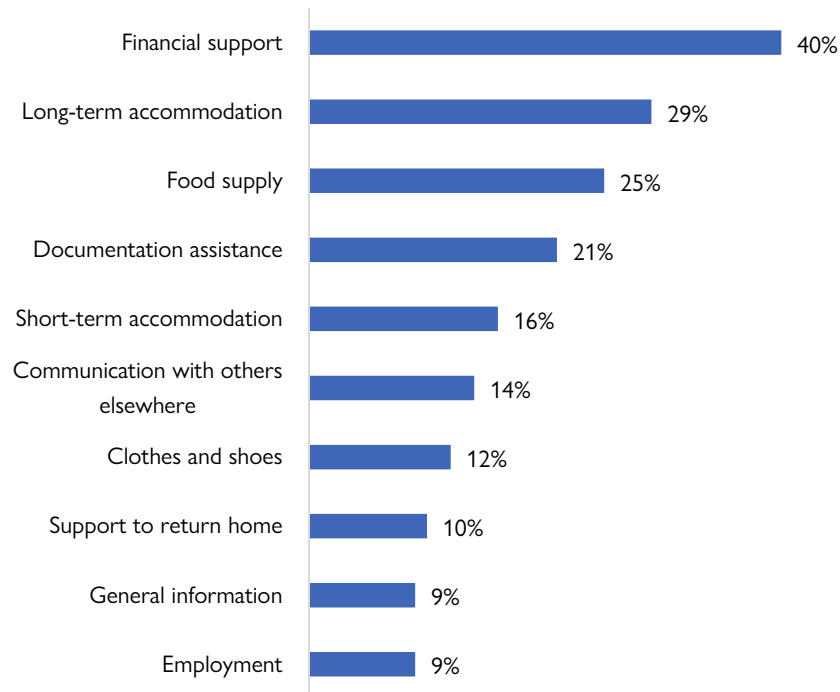
## Mid-term needs

For those who intended to stay in Belarus for at least 6 months (N=38), also mid-term needs were asked and analyzed. In the mid-term, 79 per cent of the respondents said they would need support with long-term accommodation. This was followed by 37 per cent who expressed mid-term need in financial support and another 37 per cent with a mid-term need in employment.
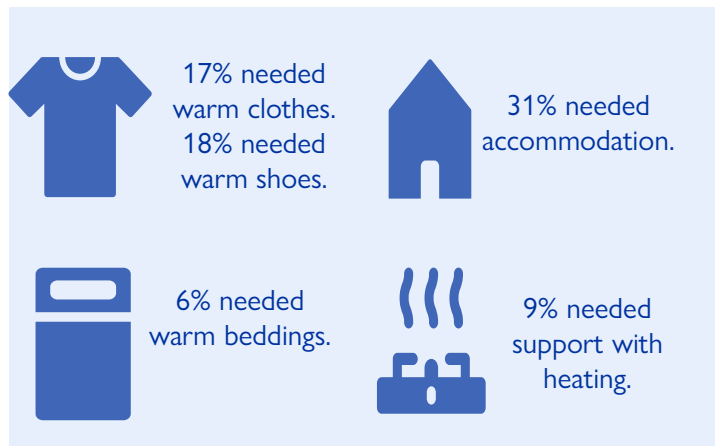
Thirty-four per cent indicated that in the mid-term they would need support with documents and registration, 26 per cent with language courses and 21 per cent expressed need in support with short-term accommodation. Mid-term needs in food supply and school enrolment for children was expressed by 18 per cent of respondents respectively.

Among other mid-term needs respondents also expressed need in clothes and shoes (11%), personal hygiene items (11%), health services (8%), household goods (5%), communications with others (3%), general information about stay (3%), legal assistance (3%) and medicines (3%).

Figure 22: Top 10 mid-term needs of respondents intending to settle in Belarus (*more than one answer possible*)

| Need | % |
|---|---|
| Long-term accommodation | 79% |
| Financial support | 37% |
| Employment | 37% |
| Documentation assistance | 34% |
| Language courses | 26% |
| Short-term accommodation | 21% |
| Food supply | 18% |
| School enrollment | 18% |
| Clothes and shoes | 11% |
| Personal hygiene items | 11% |

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## Winterization

17% needed warm clothes.
18% needed warm shoes.

31% needed accommodation.

6% needed warm beddings.

9% needed support with heating.

As this round of interviews started in February 2023, respondents were also asked whether they had any particular needs during the cold season.

Sixty-three per cent said they did not have any need related to the cold season.

Thirty-one per cent indicated need in accommodation, 18 per cent in warm shoes and 17 per cent in warm clothes. There were also 9 per cent of the respondents who indicated need in heating during the cold season and 6 per cent stressed need in warm beddings.

## Information channels

Almost half of the respondents (49%) receive information on available support and services in Belarus from international and humanitarian organizations. Forty-three per cent get information from social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and other. Twenty-six per cent indicated they receive

information from local authorities and 25 per cent from other people. Among other sources of information respondents also mentioned community organizations (22%), non-governmental organisations (18%), internet (11%), Telegram (11%), volunteers (5%) and calls and messages (3%).

## 8. Vulnerability to violence, exploitation and abuse

### Experience of discrimination in Belarus

Two per cent of the respondents reported having experienced any unfair or unequal treatment that might have been related to aspects such as nationality, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religion while in Belarus.

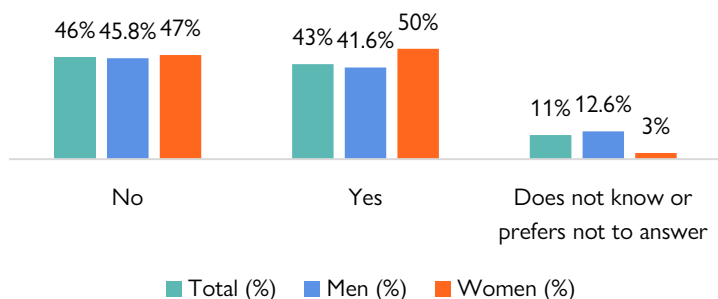Ninety per cent said they did not have any of such experience while in Belarus.

Four per cent did not know and the other four per cent preferred not to answer this question.

Figure 23: Reported experience of discrimination (%)

Prefers not to answer, 4%
Yes, 2%
Does not know, 4%
No, 90%
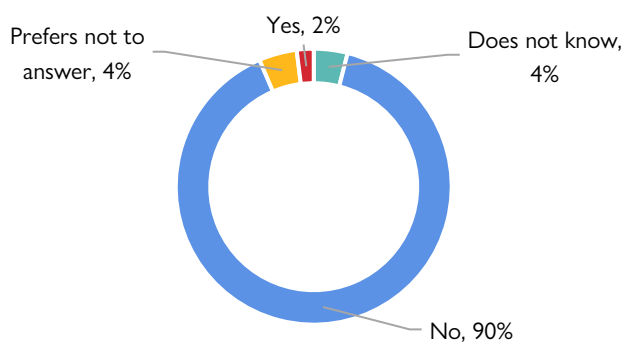
### Experience of stress and emotional upsetting

Figure 24: Reported experience of stress and emotional upsetting, by gender and total (%)

46% 45.8% 47%
43% 41.6% 50%
11% 12.6% 3%

No                Yes                Does not know or prefers not to answer

■ Total (%)  ■ Men (%)  ■ Women (%)

Overall, 43 per cent of respondents reported having suffered from stress or emotional upsetting that would impede them from carrying out their daily tasks.

Female respondents were more likely to experience stress or emotional upsetting in the past months than men (50% versus 41.6%).

Eleven per cent of respondents did not know or preferred not to answer.

## Safety in Belarus

When answering the question whether respondents feel safe in Belarus, more than half (52%) confirmed that they felt safe. Twenty-eight per cent responded that they did not feel safe, while 17 per cent did not know and 3 per cent preferred not to answer.

All respondents were also asked what were their three main safety and security concerns currently in Belarus. Fifty-nine per cent said they did not have any safety and security concerns. The three main safety and security concerns expressed by other respondents were: winter and cold season (14%), possible detention or deportation due to illegal stay in the country (8%) and accidents, petty crime or theft (4%).

Figure 25: Top 3 safety and security concerns of respondents in Belarus (%)



## Vulnerability to violence, exploitation and abuse

The survey form also included a set of questions which gathered data on migrants' vulnerability and the forms of abuse, violence and exploitation they might have experienced or witnessed during the journey. The experiences described in these questions did not aim to identify cases of human trafficking as defined by the international and national legal instruments.

If interviewers came across respondents who reported such experiences and requested further support, they referred these cases to the relevant protection actor.

Overall, 1.5 per cent of all the respondents answered positively to at least one of the five questions related to human trafficking, exploitation and abuse based on their own experience. Among the reported cases 67 per cent were experienced by male respondents, while 33 per cent by women.

With regard to the geographical areas where the reported experiences of exploitation and abuse took place Iran, Ethiopia and the Russian Federation were cited.

### *Labour exploitation*

Of the total sample, one respondent (0.5%) reported having worked or performed other activities during their journey without receiving the expected payment.

The experience of not obtaining the expected payment was reported by male respondent and took place in construction sector in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

### *Forced labour*

None of the respondents of the total sample reported having been forced to work or conduct any other activities against their will.
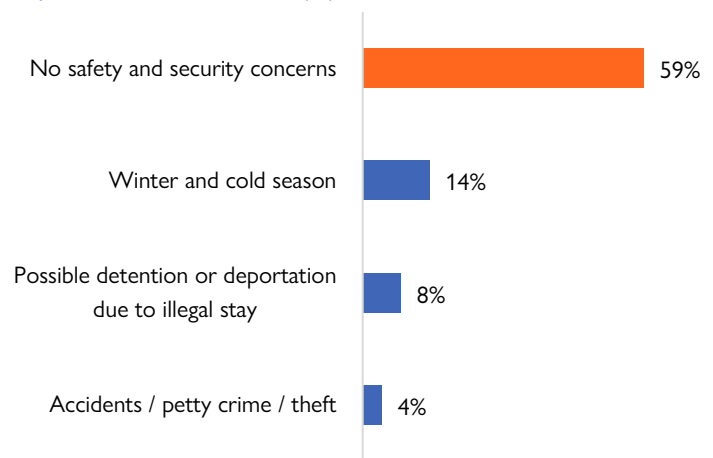
### *Experienced some form of physical violence*

When asked if they had experienced some form of physical violence during their journeys, one respondent declared having experienced some form of physical violence.

The experience was reported by male respondent and took place in Ethiopia in a form of torture.

### *Experienced any form of sexual violence*

None of the respondents reported having experienced any form of sexual violence during their journeys.

### *Being kept at a certain location against will (by persons other than the authorities of the country)*

One respondent (0.5%) reported having been kept at a certain location against will (by persons other than the authorities of the country) during their journey.

This had reportedly happened to a female respondent in the Russian Federation.

## 8. Methodology

In Belarus, the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) was activated in May 2023 for the first time, within the Ukraine crisis response. During the first round of surveys, between 4 June and 5 August 2022, 1,915 valid surveys were collected, 94 of which were of TCNs and other migrants, and the rest Ukrainians. The second round (1 September - 30 November 2022) collected 805 interviews, with 27 TCNs and other migrants among respondents. In 2023, for the first time, a dedicated survey was deployed for non-Ukrainian migrants present in Belarus.

This report is based on 202 interviews collected between March and April 2023 in coordination with the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Belarus and Public Association "Belarusian Movement of Medical Workers". The interviews were conducted by 8 enumerators from the Belarusian Movement of Medical Workers and IOM staff deployed in all six regions of Belarus: in Minsk (capital) (50 interviews conducted), Minsk region (2 interviews), Grodno region (89 interviews), Brest region (35 interviews), Gomel region (15 interviews), Mogilev region (8 interviews) and Vitebsk region (3 interviews).

Prior to the start of the survey, all enumerators were trained by IOM on DTM standards, the use of Kobo application, IOM approach to migrants' protection and assistance, the ethics of data collection and the provision of information and referral mechanisms in place.

Face-to-face interviews were conducted with adult migrants and refugees (18 years of age and above).

Respondents were mainly approached by the enumerators at Belarusian Movement of Medical Workers offices, IOM office in Minsk, IOM regional project sites, bus and train stations, detention centers, temporary accommodation centers and different accommodation facilities.

The survey was anonymous and voluntary and, mostly, conducted one-on-one with respondents in safe and isolated spaces. Surveys were administered only if consent from the respondent was given.

The respondent could stop the survey at any time.

The questionnaire was available in e-format in Kobo (English and Russian) and in paper forms translated into Russian, English and Arabic. The preferred language was determined by the interviewee. All responses were checked for any systematic issues by enumerator and this process did not identify any problems. Only fully completed surveys were taken in account for this report.

The sampling framework was not based on verified figures of stranded migrants and refugees staying in the various regions across Belarus, due to the limited availability of baseline information.

Whilst every attempt was made to capture as many respondents as possible, the operational reality of fieldwork was confronted with different levels of accessibility of transit and stay locations and different availability of potential target respondents to comfortably spend 10-20 minutes responding to the questionnaire depending on a mix of personal conditions. The fact that in Belarus a large part of potential respondents resides within privately owned accommodations (renting flats or staying at co-nationals/friends), hotels and hostels was one of the major limitations in reaching out and capturing more respondents.

In addition to that, many of stranded migrants enter Belarus from the Russian Federation where there are no border check points between Belarus and the Russian Federation, thus it was not possible to target these potential respondents immediately after their entry to Belarus.

Not all enumerators spoke the language of the individual they were interviewing. In these cases, translation support was provided by Belarusian Movement of Medical Workers or IOM.

Whilst results cannot be deemed representative, the internal consistency within the data within each country and at the regional level suggests that the findings of the current sampling framework have practical value.

## DTM

Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) is a system to track and monitor displacement and population mobility. The survey form was designed to capture the demographic profiles of respondents and of the group they are travelling with, if any; it asks about intentions relative to the intended final destination and prospects of permanence in the country of the survey; it captures their displacement patterns and reasons for migration; it gathers information regarding a set of main needs that the respondents expressed as more pressing at the moment of the interview; it also asks about protection needs and vulnerabilities faced by stranded migrants on their journey or in Belarus and integration challenges faced in Belarus.

DTM is part of IOM's Global Data Institute.

Please visit: https://dtm.iom.int/belarus

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