

# FLOW MONITORING SURVEYS WITH MIGRANTS TRAVELLING THROUGH MONTENEGRO

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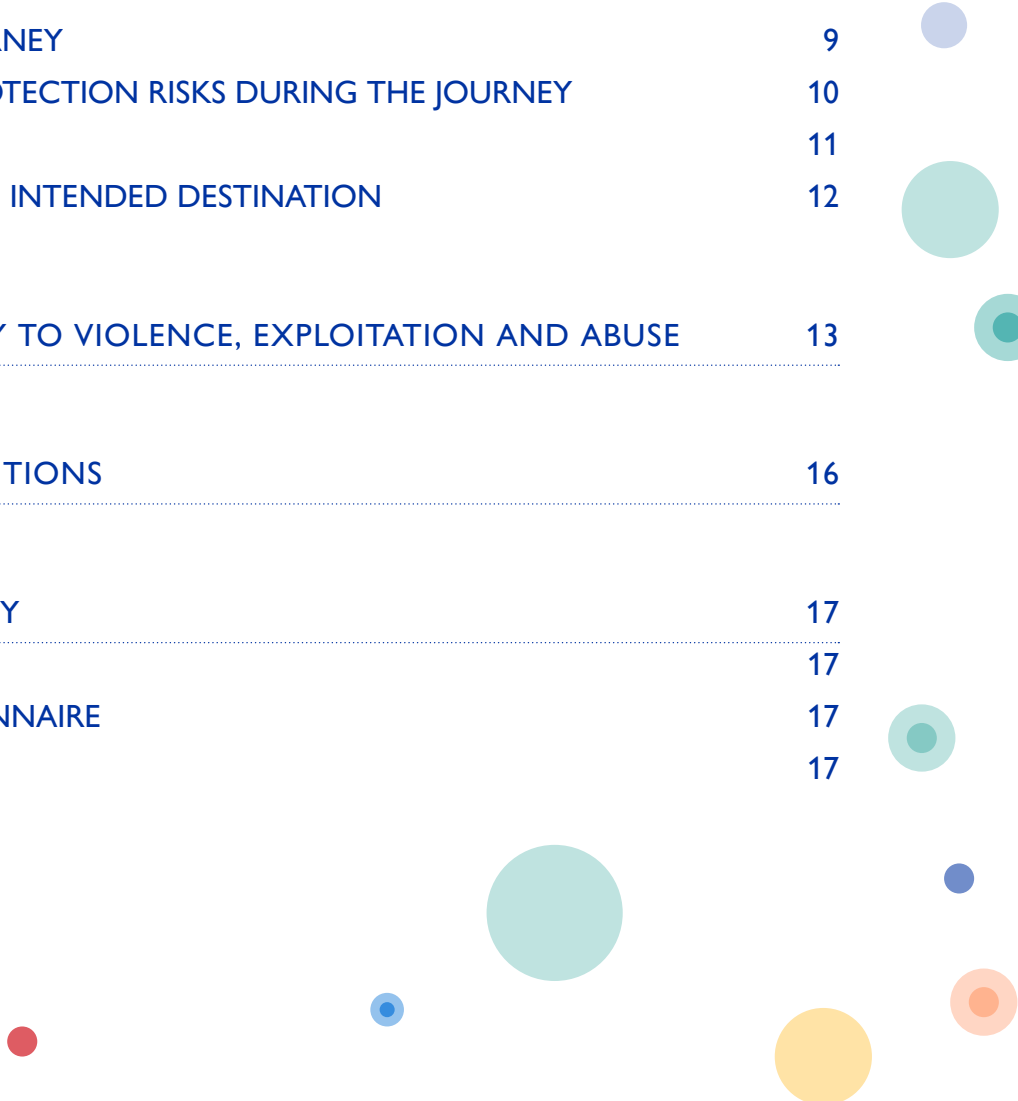
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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the results of the second round of the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) Flow Monitoring Surveys (FMS) implemented in Montenegro. The data was collected from 8 June to 28 August 2023. IOM interviewed a total of 126 respondents.<sup>1</sup>

FMS provides a snapshot of the profiles, experiences and needs of migrants residing in the Department for the Reception of Foreigners Seeking International Protection in Božaj and in the Department for the Reception of Foreigners Seeking International Protection in Spuž in Montenegro. The survey asks questions on demographics, education and employment backgrounds, the circumstances of the migration journey and migration factors, as well as future intentions.

- Eighty-nine per cent of respondents were single adult men between the ages of 18 and 29. Nationals of Afghanistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran made up 75 per cent of the population sample. More than one-third (45%) of all respondents had completed at least lower secondary education and 43 per cent were employed prior to leaving their countries of origin.
- Sixty-five per cent were travelling in a group of people, and most of these groups (51%) were made up of non-family members. Nineteen per cent of respondents reported travelling with facilitators.
- Germany (35%), Italy (21%) and France (12%) were the most frequently cited countries of intended destination. Nationals of Afghanistan (35%) and the Islamic Republic of Iran (48%) were more likely to cite Germany as their country of intended destination, while Bangladeshi nationals were more likely to state Italy as their intended country of destination (56%).
- The three main reported drivers of migration were war/conflict (43%), economic reasons (30%), and limited access to services (16%).
- During their journeys, almost all respondents (98%) of respondents reported at least one problem, ranging from robbery to theft of documents, health-related issues, mental health problems as well as a lack of food and shelter. Over one-third (39%) of respondents noted that they had experienced health problems.
- Most migrants transit through Montenegro after long journeys, often having witnessed or experienced significant hardship and traumatic events. The most frequently cited needs during their journeys relate to primary needs such as cash assistance which was cited by 33 per cent of all respondents as their primary need and 27 per cent who reported accommodation and shelter.<sup>2</sup>
- Additionally, 28 per cent of all respondents reported having been pushed back at least once during their journeys with 20 per cent of all respondents having been pushed back more than once before reaching Montenegro.
- Over two-thirds of respondents (72%) have spent more than 2,500 USD for their journeys. The journeys were largely financed with savings or through selling of property in the countries of origin.
- The vast majority of migrants (96%) do not intend to return to their countries of origin. Of those who considered returning, most reported being too exhausted from the current living conditions to continue the journey.

<sup>1</sup> The term "respondents" refers to migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers as the reference population is made of persons traveling along mixed migration routes. These terms are used interchangeably throughout the report.

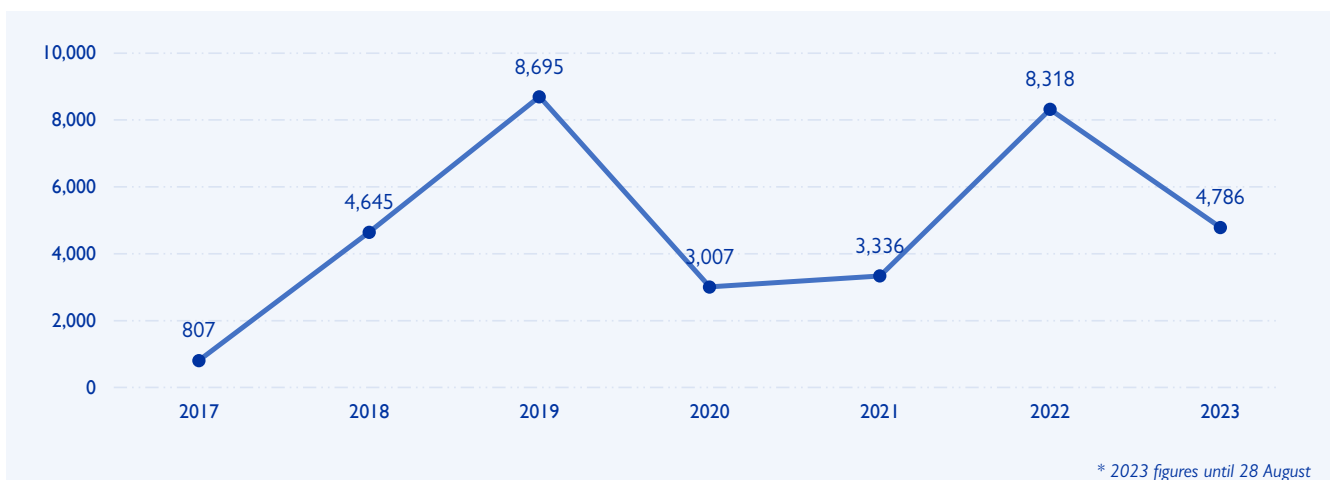
<sup>2</sup> These are the main needs faced during their journeys, when migrants are in transit and not while they are hosted at TRCs where they have recourse to a shelter as well as a range of support services, including food, non-food items as well as mental health and psychosocial support.

# 1 INTRODUCTION

Since 2015, the Western Balkan region has emerged as a major crossroads for migrants and refugees<sup>3</sup> attempting to reach the European Union (EU). Prior to 2017, migrants travelled mainly through North Macedonia and Serbia. However, in 2017, the routes diversified with increasing flows also through Albania, Kosovo\*,<sup>4</sup> Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina route.

Montenegro has been an important part of the Western Balkan route for migrants trying to reach Western Europe. IOM Montenegro formed part of DTM activities in the region to better grasp the nature of migration on this route, as well as to assist official authorities and humanitarian responders in delivering tailored services.

Figure 1. Registrations of migrants in Montenegro 2017 - 2023



Source: [DTM Mixed Migration Flows to Europe by Sea and Land](#)

<sup>3</sup> Mixed migration movements are those in which different categories of people are travelling together, generally in an irregular manner, using the same routes and means of transport, but for different reasons. People travelling as part of mixed movements have varying needs and profiles and may include asylum seekers, refugees, trafficked persons, unaccompanied/separated children, and migrants in an irregular situation.

<sup>4</sup> References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

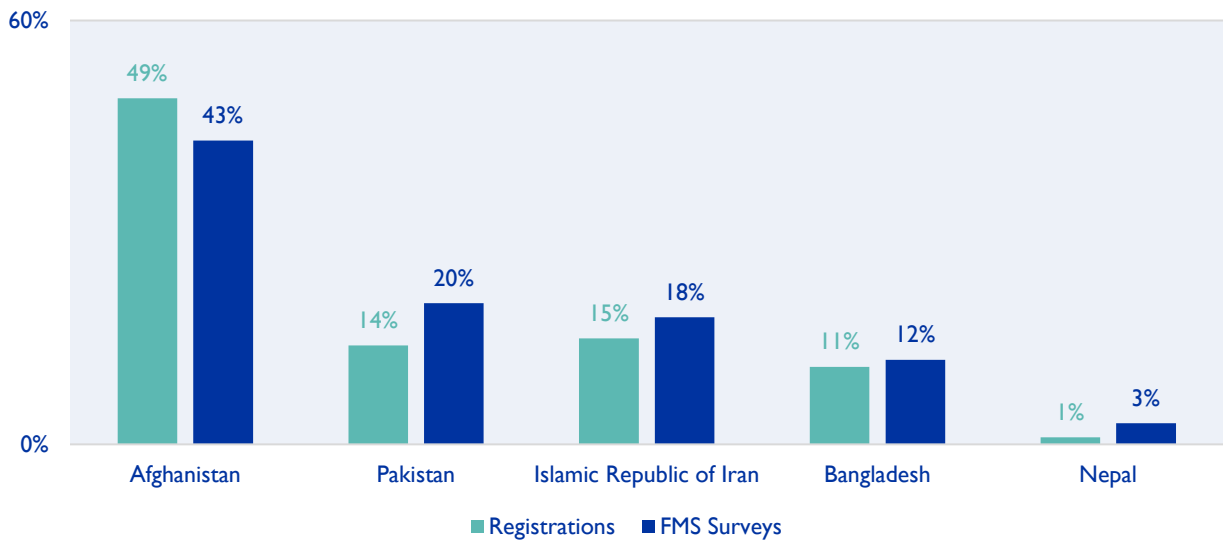
## 2 MIGRANTS TRAVELLING THROUGH MONTENEGRO: BASELINE PROFILE

### 2.1 SAMPLE SIZE AND MAIN NATIONALITIES

The information in this report is based on a sample of 126 respondents.<sup>5</sup> The nationalities of the respondents were nationals of Afghanistan (43%), Pakistan (20%), the Islamic Republic of Iran (18%), Bangladesh (12%), Nepal (3%), India (2%), Morocco (1%) and the Russian Federation

(1%). This is broadly consistent with the nationalities registered by authorities in Montenegro. See Figure 2 for a comparison of the top five nationalities of FMS respondents and registrations by authorities.

Figure 2. Share of respondents and of registrations' data by Montenegro authorities, top nationalities (%)



Source: DTM MNE FMS 2023 (n=126)

### 2.2 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Men represent the majority (88%) of the sample, followed by 11 per cent women and one per cent other.<sup>6</sup> The median age of respondents was 25, with the youngest person interviewed being 15 years old and the oldest 56 years old.<sup>7</sup>

More than two-thirds (69%) of the respondents declared they were single, which is proportionally similar to 2022 when 73 per cent of the respondents were single. Twenty-nine per cent of respondents were married, two per cent divorced, and less than one per cent were widowed (1%). More than three-quarters of respondents (79%) had no

children. Of those who reported having children, 67 per cent declared having at least one child in the country of origin, which is higher proportion compared to the 47 per cent from previous round. Forty-one per cent said they had children travelling with them, of whom 46 per cent had children younger than five years of age.

The two most commonly spoken languages were Farsi (66%), Bengali (9%), followed by Punjabi (8%), Urdu (5%), Nepali and Pashto (4% each), Hindi, Malayalam, Russian, Arabic and Turkish (1% each).

<sup>5</sup> Two other migrants met by enumerators stated that they had already participated in the FMS before, and hence were not asked the remainder of the questions after the initial ones.

<sup>6</sup> The questionnaire includes one question on sex and one question on gender self-identification, both including the possibility of declining to specify for the respondent.

<sup>7</sup> Children require the signed informed consent of the parent or legal guardian prior to being interviewed.

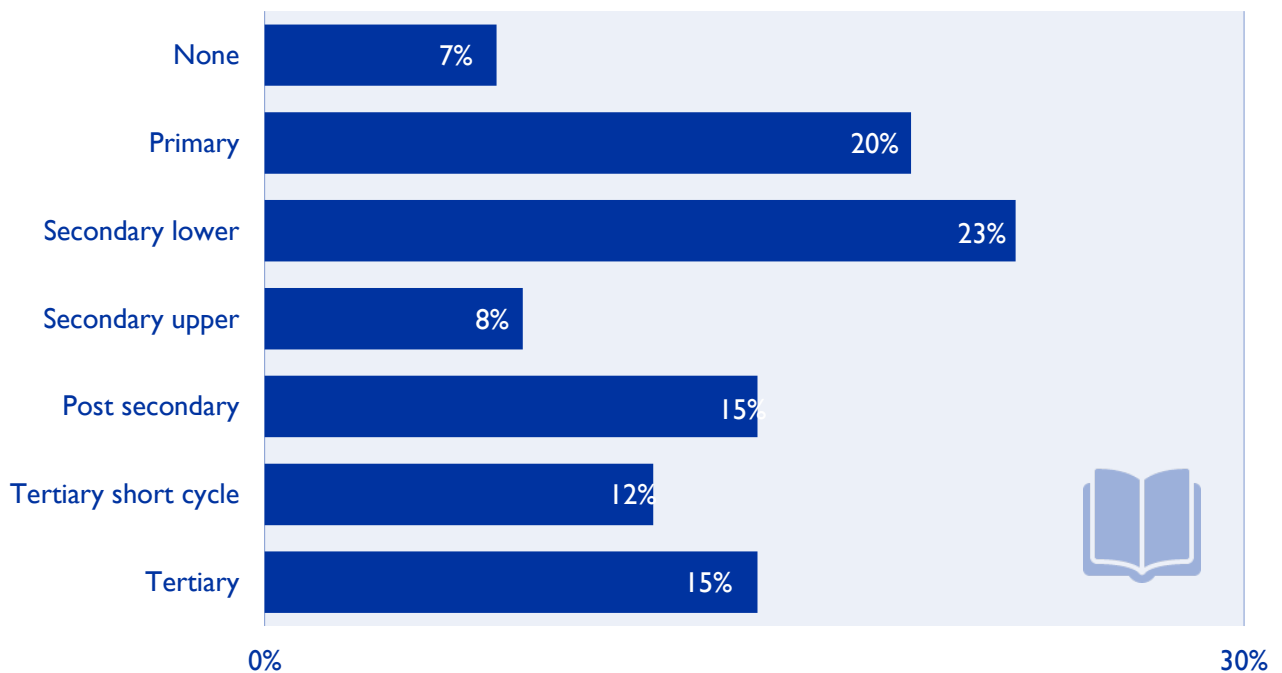
## 2.3 EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

### Education

Twenty-three per cent of respondents reported having completed lower secondary education, which is a decrease compared to 2022 when almost half the respondents reported completing lower secondary education. In 2023,

a higher proportion of respondents had completed at least tertiary education (bachelor's and master's) compared to 2022 (15% in 2023, compared to 9% in 2022).

Figure 3. Highest level of educational attainment



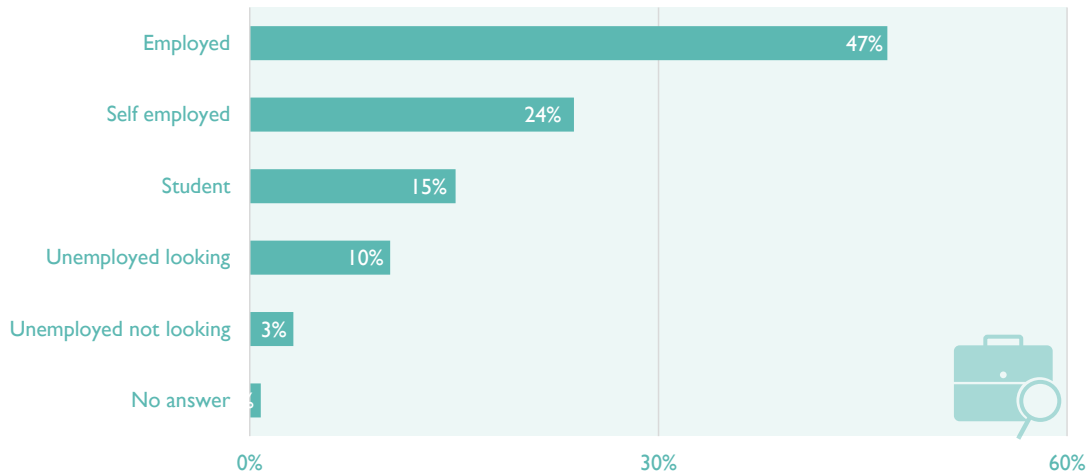
Source: DTM MNE FMS 2023 (n=126)

### Employment status before departure

Over two-fifths (47%) of respondents declared they had been employed before leaving their country of origin, followed by 24 per cent who were self-employed, which is a larger proportion than in 2022 when 7 per cent were self-employed. Fifteen per cent of respondents were students in 2023, compared to the 6 per cent in 2022. Ten per cent of respondents reported being unemployed and looking for a job in 2023, compared to the 39 per cent of respondents in 2022. Three per cent reported being unemployed and not looking for a job, and one person did not provide an answer to the question.

Among respondents who declared they had been employed before leaving their country of origin, the most frequently reported jobs were skilled manual workers (29%), craft and related trade workers (17%), service and sales workers (15%), technicians (10%), elementary occupations and managers (7% each), machine operators and professionals (6% each), armed forces (2%) and clerical support worker (1%).

Figure 4. Employment status before departure



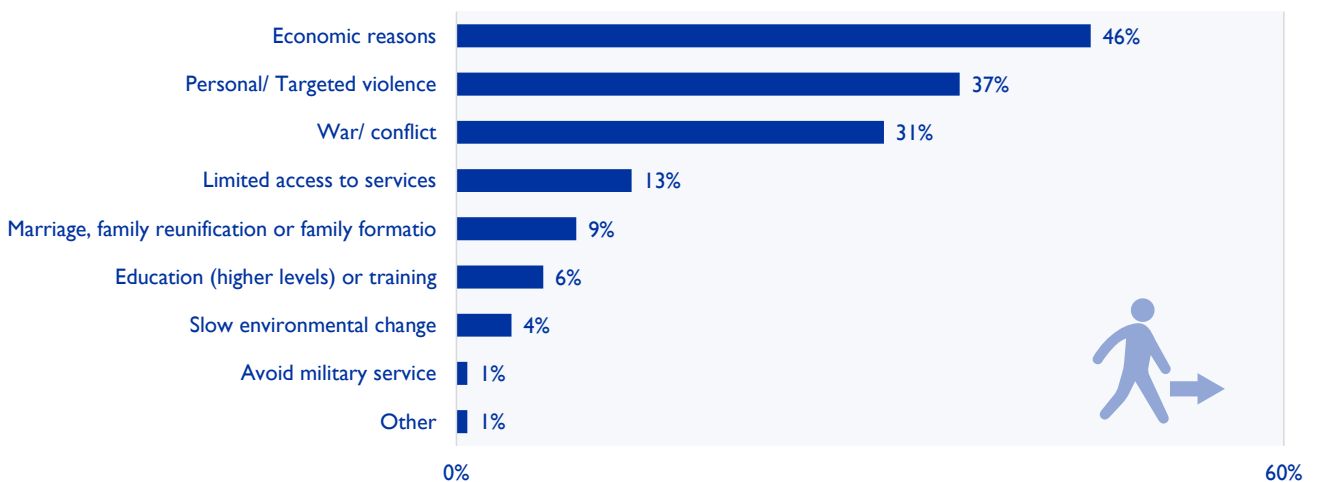
Source: DTM MNE FMS 2023 (n=126)

## 2.4 REASONS FOR LEAVING THE COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

Interviewees were also asked to mention the two main reasons for leaving their countries of origin.<sup>8</sup> Figure 5 shows the main reasons in comparison. Over two-fifths (46%) of respondents reported economic reasons as their primary motive, followed by personal or targeted violence (37%). In 2023, war and conflict was the third most cited reason for leaving the country of origin with 31 per cent of respondents citing this as one of their two main reasons for leaving whereas in 2022 it was the most frequently cited reason.

Among the women in the sample, 43 per cent reported war and conflict as their main grounds for leaving. This was followed by 36 per cent who stated personal or targeted violence, 29 per cent who stated economic reasons, and 29 per cent who reported marriage, family reunification or family formation as reason for leaving.

Figure 5. Main reasons for leaving the country of origin (multiple choices possible)



Source: DTM MNE FMS 2023 (n=126)

<sup>8</sup> The list of categories included in the questionnaire were: sudden onset natural disaster (e.g., flood, storm, landslide, earthquake); slow environmental change (e.g. livestock died due to drought, loss of agriculture due to drought/poor rainfall, sea level rise destroyed homes/assets, reduced fish stocks); war/conflict; personal/ targeted violence; limited access to services (basic education, health care, water, food, accommodation, transportation); economic reasons; education (higher levels) or training; marriage, family reunification or family formation; COVID-19 related reasons.



## 2.5 REASONS FOR LEAVING THE COUNTRY OF DEPARTURE

Almost two-thirds (65%) of the survey respondents had been living in a country other than that of their origin or habitual residence for more than a year. The three main countries in which people had been living for more than a year were Türkiye (33%), Greece (22%) and the Islamic

Republic of Iran (20%). The two main reported reasons for leaving the country of departure and moving towards Western Europe were fear of being repatriated (88%) and limited access to services, such as basic education, health care, food, accommodation and transportation (76%).

## 2.6 MODE OF TRAVEL

Most respondents (81%) stated that they were travelling in a group of people. Of those who were travelling in groups, almost half (49%) were travelling in groups of non-family members, while 28 per cent were travelling with relatives and 23 per cent stated they travelled with facilitators. Those who travelled with relatives were mostly travelling with their children, spouses or extended (non-first line) family members.

As in 2022, the majority of (93%) female respondents in this survey said that they were traveling with a group of people.

Forty-seven per cent of respondents, reported that someone helped them organise the journey, compared to the previous round when 26 per cent reported receiving help in organizing journey.

Figure 6. Mode of travel of the respondents



Source: DTM MNE FMS 2023 (n=126)

## 2.7 COST OF JOURNEY

Figure 7 below provides a distribution of the costs of the journeys from the country of origin or habitual residence until Montenegro.

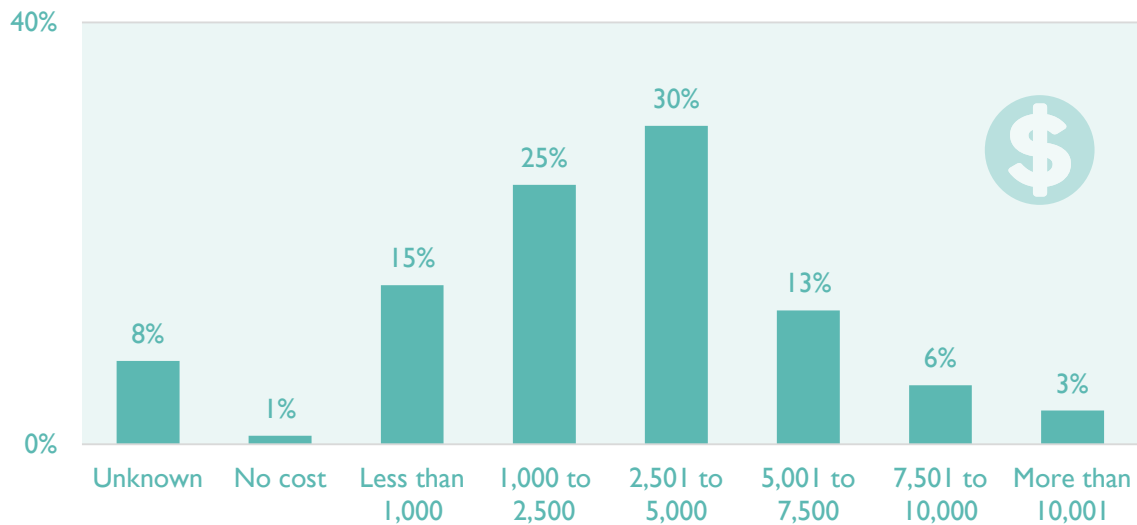
Among the women, 21 per cent declared they have paid between 2,500 and 5,000 USD, compared to 35 of the men. Twenty-nine per cent of women reported unknown cost of journey compared to the five per cent of men.

More than two-fifths of the respondents (41%) reported

having paid for the journey with their own money, followed by 24 per cent who paid for journey by selling property and 24 per cent who reported financial help from relatives in the country of origin or habitual residence. Twenty-two per cent raised money by working during the journey, 15 per cent relied on loans, 10 per cent received support from friends abroad, eight per cent received support from relatives abroad, three per cent reported financial help by friends in the country of origin, and three per cent reported financial help through a recruitment agency.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> The total does not add up to 100 as the respondents could provide multiple answers.

Figure 7. Cost of the journey in USD from the country of origin to Montenegro



Source: DTM MNE FMS 2023 (n=126)

Fifty-eight per cent of respondents reported having paid for the journey by hawala<sup>10</sup> instalments, compared to 31 per cent in 2022. Eighteen per cent of respondents reported having paid for the journey by cash instalments, while ten per cent paid by leg of the journey, and seven per cent paid the full amount in advance. Three per cent

said they would have to pay the full amount upon arrival and the remaining three per cent did not provide an answer. Over half the respondents (53%) reported having to repay all or part of the travel expenses upon arrival at the intended destination country, compared to 65 per cent in 2022.

## 2.8 PROBLEMS/PROTECTION RISKS DURING THE JOURNEY

Interviewees were asked about a list of specific incidents and problems they could have faced during the journey. See Figure 8 below for a breakdown of the problems faced by respondents.

Ninety-eight per cent of robberies occurred in transit countries with the remaining two per cent occurring in Montenegro. Fifty-seven per cent of female respondents said that they had been robbed, while in 2022 none of the female respondents had experienced robbery.

The most frequently cited transit countries where the reported experiences took place were Albania (49%), Greece (33%), and Türkiye (12%).

Eleven per cent of respondents declared they had suffered theft of documents, of whom 86 per cent of occurred

in transit countries, including in Greece (50%), Türkiye (42%) and Pakistan (8%).

Most respondents (92%) reported a lack of shelter at some point during the journey, out of which 91 per cent said this happened while in transit including in Greece (52%), Albania (38%), Türkiye (9%) and the Syrian Arab Republic (1%).<sup>11</sup>

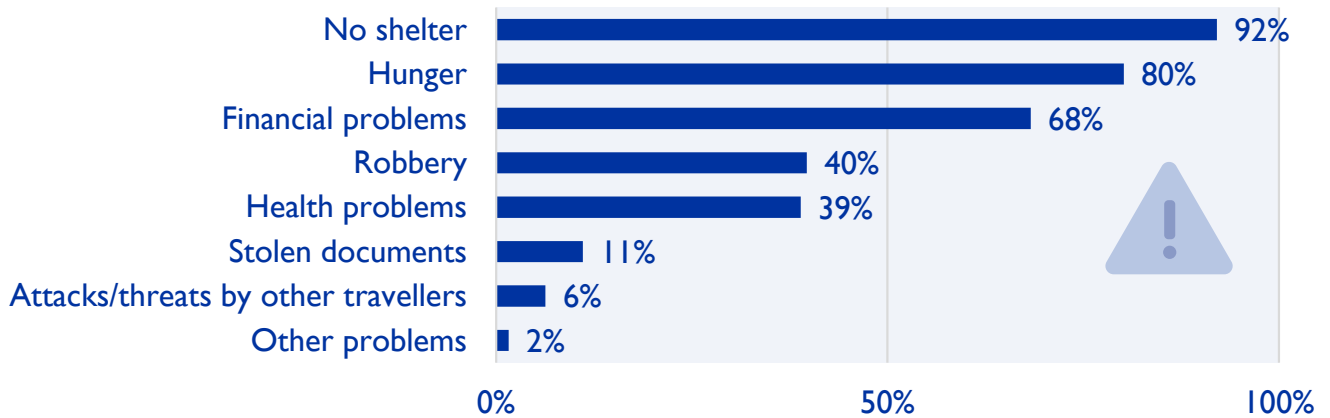
Respondents were also asked if they had been readmitted<sup>12</sup> to another country by the authorities of transit countries during their journey. Fifty per cent of respondents reported that they had been readmitted more than two times. Three quarters of those who had been readmitted, were readmitted at least four times. The most frequently cited countries to which people were readmitted were Greece (71%), Albania (19%), and Türkiye (6%).

<sup>10</sup> Hawala is an informal money transfer system in which money is passed on through a network of brokers (who are known as hawaladars) without the actual/physical movement of cash. It is the transmission of money in ways other than the regular banking routes and hence sometimes called underground banking.

<sup>11</sup> The population surveyed is mobile and the reasons for not having shelter/place where to sleep are disparate, including the unwillingness to stay in a reception facility, and the desire to be as close as possible to the country's borders to reach the final intended destination as soon as possible.

<sup>12</sup> The survey asks migrants questions about whether they have been readmitted from one country to another. Migrants may or may not know the difference between formal readmission procedures and push backs and may use or understand those terms interchangeably. Findings on readmission should therefore not be understood to definitively mean pushbacks.

Figure 8. Percentage of respondents who reported some problems either in transit or in Montenegro



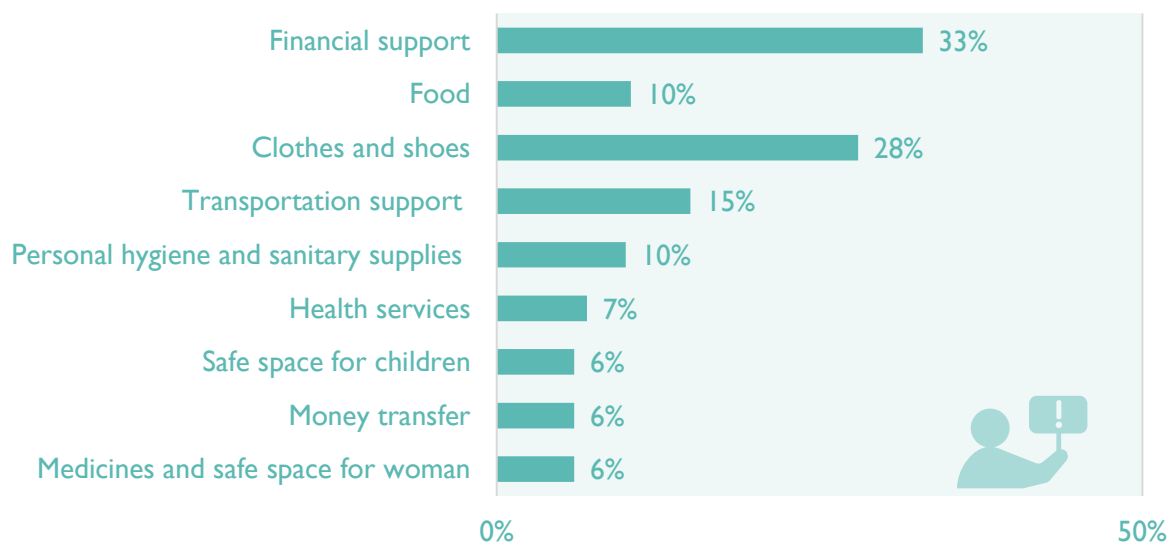
Source: DTM MNE FMS 2023 (n=126)

## 2.9 MAIN NEEDS

Respondents were asked what their main unmet needs were at the time of the interview and to provide them in order of priority. Most respondents (33%) reported financial support as their main need, followed by food (31%), clothes and shoes (28%), transportation support (15%), personal hygiene and sanitary supplies (10%),

health services (7%), safe space for children, money transfer, medicines and safe space for woman (6% each). This was followed by significantly lower percentages for other needs (psychological counselling, documentation and registration, legal assistance, job, short-term and long-term accommodation, general information).

Figure 9. Main needs reported (multiple choices possible)



Source: DTM MNE FMS 2023 (n=126)

## 2.10 COUNTRY OF INTENDED DESTINATION

Germany (48%), Italy (20%), and France (10%) were the three most frequently cited countries of intended destination, which were the same three countries in 2022. The final intended destination countries differ for the three main nationalities (Afghanistan, Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran). For Afghans, the top three intended destinations were Germany (70%), Switzerland (9%), France and the United Kingdom (7% each). For Pakistani nationals, the top three intended destination were Italy (56%), Germany and Portugal (12% each). For Iranian nationals, the two main intended destinations were Germany (64%), and the United Kingdom (9%). These proportions are relatively similar to 2022, when Germany (35%), Italy (21%), and France (12%) were the three most frequently cited countries of intended destination.

As to why migrants specifically chose the country of destination, 35 per cent stated that this was due to appealing socio-economic conditions. Twenty-four per cent of respondents said it was due to ease of access to asylum procedures, which is a decrease compared to last

year when 10 per cent stated this. Fourteen per cent of respondents stated that it was due to a well-established network of co-nationals, followed by 10 per cent who said they had relatives in the country of destination, and nine per cent who said it was due to safety. Four per cent stated it was their only choice due to physical constraints and two per cent said it was because they knew the specific language while two per cent said it was for other reasons.

Fifty-seven per cent of respondents said they had information on asylum or how to obtain documents to stay legally in the intended country of destination, compared to 40 per cent in 2022. Forty-three per cent of respondents stated that they had family members in the country of destination, most of whom were extended family members. Two per cent of respondents stated they had immediate family in the country of destination. Almost all (97%) of those who had family members in the country of destination stated that they had not attempted to reunify with their family through legal procedures.

### 3 VULNERABILITY TO VIOLENCE, EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE

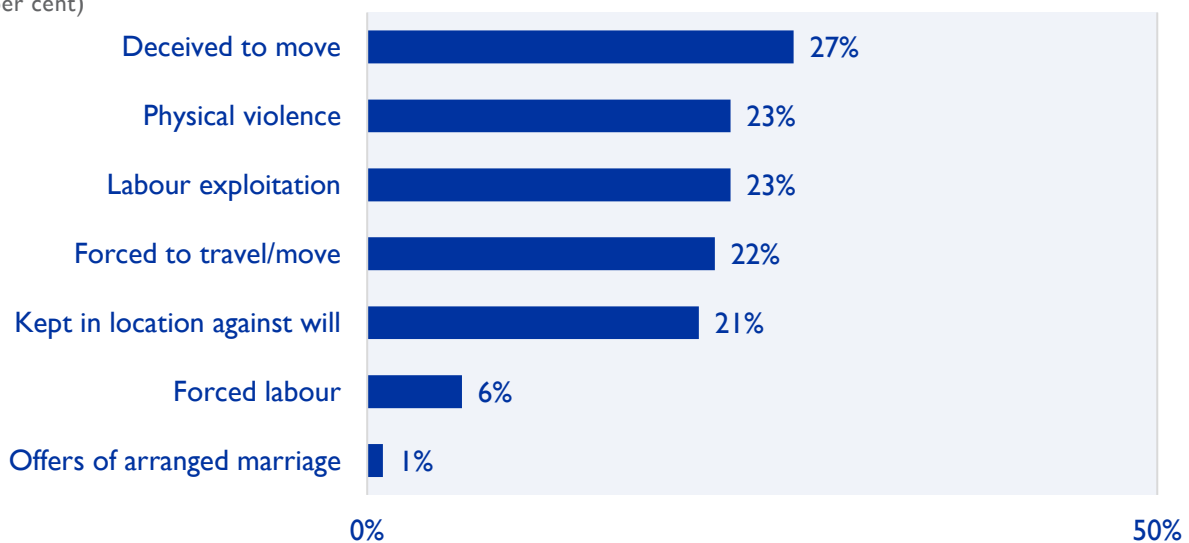
The questionnaire also included a module which gathers data on migrants’ vulnerability and the forms of abuse, violence and exploitation they may have experienced or witnessed during the journey. More specifically, the survey includes eight questions that aim to capture information about whether the respondent, during their journey:

1. Worked or performed other activities without getting the expected payment
2. Was forced to perform work or other activities against their will
3. Was approached by someone offering a marriage (for them or close family member – child or sibling)
4. Was kept at a certain location against their will (by persons other than the authorities of the country)
5. Had experienced any form of physical violence
6. Was forced to travel/move
7. Was lied to, tricked, manipulated, indebted, given false promises, or otherwise deceived in order to get to travel/ move
8. Had access to travel documents during the journey

These questions relate to an event, that might indicate exposure to human trafficking, exploitation and abuse practices, physical and sexual violence, experienced by the respondent. The experiences described in these questions do not aim to identify cases of human trafficking as defined by international and national legal instruments. If interviewers came across respondents who requested further support, they referred these cases to the relevant protection actor.

Sixty-four per cent of respondents reported having experienced at least one of these eight indicators.

Figure 10. Indicators of violence, exploitation or abuse (share of positive responses per indicator, total does not add up to 100 per cent)



Source: DTM MNE FMS 2023 (n=126)

## UNPAID LABOUR



Of the total sample, 23 per cent reported they had worked or performed other activities during their journey without receiving the expected payment, which is an increase compared to 2022 when seven per cent reported they had worked or performed other activities during their journey without receiving the expected payment. Most of these experiences took place in Türkiye (86%) and Greece (10%). Of the respondents who declared that they had worked without obtaining the expected payment, the two main employment sectors reported were manufacturing and construction industries.

## FORCED LABOUR



Eight respondents (6%) reported having been forced to work or conduct activities against their will. Of the eight respondents who declared they were forced to work or perform other activities against their will, seven said this happened in Türkiye, followed by one respondent in Islamic Republic of Iran. The two main employment sectors reported by the respondents were manufacturing and service industries.

## OFFERS OF AN ARRANGED MARRIAGE



One (male) respondent (1%) reported they had been approached by someone offering a marriage, which had reportedly happened in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

## KEPT AT A CERTAIN LOCATION AGAINST WILL



Twenty-six respondents (21%) reported they had been held in a location against their will during their journey (4 women and 22 men), compared to five respondents (5%) in 2022. This had reportedly happened in Greece (58%), Türkiye (27%), and the Islamic Republic of Iran (15%).

## PHYSICAL VIOLENCE

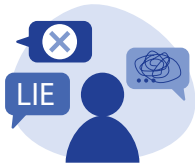


When asked if they had experienced some form of physical violence during their journeys, 23 per cent declared that they had, compared to 11 per cent in 2022. The most frequently cited country was the Greece (62%), followed by Türkiye (24%), Albania (7%), Croatia and the Islamic Republic of Iran (3% each).



### FORCED TO TRAVEL

Twenty-two per cent of respondents stated that someone had forced them to travel or move at one point during their journeys. Most of these experiences happened in Greece (54%) followed by Türkiye (29%) and Albania (18%).



### LIED, TRICKED, OR OTHERWISE DECEIVED IN ORDER TO TRAVEL

Twenty-seven per cent of respondents reported being tricked, manipulated, indebted, given false promises, or otherwise deceived in order to travel or move. This allegedly happened in Greece (53%), Türkiye (29%), Albania (15%) and the Islamic Republic of Iran (3%).



### NO TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

Over half (55%) of respondents reported that they never had documents during journey. Twenty-six per cent reported having had their documents stolen, seven per cent reported having lost documents during journey, three per cent reported to have someone else's documents and two per cent had their documents during the journey.

## 4 RETURN INTENTIONS

Over two-thirds (68%) of respondents reported they had not considered returning to their country of origin during their journey, compared to the 52 per cent in 2022.<sup>13</sup> Eighty per cent of the respondents who considered returning, indicated they were too exhausted and tired from journey, while 18 per cent mentioned legal or physical barriers preventing from continuing the journey. One respondent reported document expiration as a reason.

Among those who had not considered returning, 62 per cent stated that they were not willing to return while

others mentioned security concerns (34%), or because they were unaware of this option (2%). One respondent stated an overriding desire to join family in the destination country (1%).

Of those who replied that they were not planning to return, the majority (92%) planned to continue their journeys to their intended country of destination, followed by six per cent who planned to travel to another country from Montenegro and two per cent who said they intended to stay in Montenegro.



AVRR outreach activities carried out by IOM Montenegro. ©IOM Montenegro 2023

<sup>13</sup> In both 2022 and 2023, IOM Montenegro implemented 12 returns in each year through its Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration program.



## 5 METHODOLOGY

Flow Monitoring Surveys are part of the IOM's DTM research activities in the Mediterranean and WB region. These started in October 2015 are conducted within the framework of the IOM's research on populations on the move through the Mediterranean, WB and Western African Atlantic routes to Europe. The analysis provides information on profiles, transit routes and vulnerabilities of respondents.

FMS gathers information about migrants' profiles, including age, sex, gender, countries and areas of origin, levels of

education and employment status before migration, key transit points on their route, cost of the journey, reasons for moving and intentions. It also has a module on migrants' vulnerability to and potential past experience of abuse, exploitation and violence.

All analyses, together with the latest information on arrivals to Europe, can be accessed via DTM's portal on mixed migration [Flows to Europe](#).

### 5.1 SAMPLING

The reference population consists of migrants in Montenegro above the age of 14. IOM Montenegro used a non-random sampling procedure, attempting to reflect

the general demographic profile of the migrants present in the country in the covered period.

### 5.2 THE QUESTIONNAIRE

DTM's FMS baseline module captures data on the demographic profile of the respondents, their education and employment background, the circumstances of their migration journey and migration factors, their place of origin or their last country of habitual residence, and their future intentions with regards to the country of destination.

The second FMS module contains questions that refer to experience exploitation, violence and abuse that may amount to human trafficking. The module was developed

together with IOM's Protection Division's experts and gathers information on events and practices, experienced directly by the respondent or by his/her family member(s), or that are witnessed by the respondent during the journey.

The third module contains questions related to return intentions. As outreach activities on the existence and functioning of AVRR were run by IOM in the country, this module of the FMS asks respondents questions on the intention to return to the country of origin and awareness.

### 5.3 LIMITATIONS

The data presented in this document are representative of the individuals surveyed in the covered locations and during the indicated timeframe. The data should not be generalized and should not represent a full picture of regional migration, but rather of mixed migratory flows in the specific locations monitored in Montenegro during the covered period.

It should also be noted that a lower percentage of women of the total migrants in Montenegro were interviewed,

for several reasons, including that women tend to be less willing to be interviewed, and that they are more difficult to approach when travelling with male family members. Furthermore, women are more likely to travel in families who tend to organize private accommodation and may therefore be less visible in the locations covered by the data collection.

