

## ABOUT THE PROJECT

This is an interim progress bulletin of activities implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Central Asia and the Russian Federation under the project “Mitigating Socio-Economic Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Migrants and Communities in Central Asia and The Russian Federation”, funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). It contributes to the overall objective of the IOM COVID-19 Global Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan to halt further transmission of COVID-19 and mitigate the impact of the outbreak, including its social and economic aspects. While the efforts are initially focused on preparedness and response, IOM keeps the need for recovery in mind. This includes the approach of “Leaving No One Behind”.

The key partners of IOM in implementing the project are the governments of the participating countries in Central Asia and the Russian Federation, local authorities, National Banks, the private sector, and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs).



Data collection Process, DTM, Tajikistan  
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Direct Assistance, Kyrgyzstan  
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## PURPOSE OF THE BULLETIN

This bulletin provides an overview of the data included in the thematic area “migrant protection and direct assistance”.

Under the Project outcome: “Protection and assistance, needs of migrants are mitigated and addressed”, IOM actively engaged with government actors, the private sector, civil society, communities, and individuals to re-establish socioeconomic support to prevent human suffering throughout the crisis and prepare for a durable recovery.

Vulnerable migrants received gender-sensitive protection and assistance. This assistance included the delivery of food and non-food items (NFIs), temporary shelter, return assistance, transportation assistance (by land or by air), and medical assistance. Delivery of direct emergency support was conducted by IOM offices in cooperation with partner organizations, including local NGOs.

The bulletins are ordered as follows:  
Bulletin 1 - Socio-Demographic Profile of migrants  
Bulletin 2 - Migration Trajectory  
Bulletin 3 - Remittances  
Bulletin 4 - Employment Situation  
Bulletin 5 - COVID-19 Impacts and Vulnerabilities  
Bulletin 6 - Direct Assistance

DIRECT ASSISTANCE

During the period of October 2020 – April 2021, IOM Kyrgyzstan worked in cooperation with nine NGO partners in the Kyrgyz provinces of Chui, Talas, Batken, Issyk Kul, Jalal-Abad, Naryn, and Osh.

In total, 295 vulnerable migrants (163 male migrants, 132 female migrants), aged 2 to 69 including 11 minors (3 boys/8 girls), who were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, received IOM assistance within the project, including food, NFIs, and voluntary return. Among them, 260 vulnerable migrants are citizens of Kyrgyzstan who returned during the COVID-19 lockdown.

18 migrants, who had been adversely affected by COVID-19 containment measures/lockdowns and had lost their jobs were referred by NGO partners and assisted with their return to Kyrgyzstan. Nine of them are migrants from the Russian Federation, five migrants are from Ukraine, and four migrants are from Kazakhstan.

One stranded migrant from the Russian Federation and 19 stranded migrant citizens of Moldova were provided with pre-departure assistance by NGO partners.

Almost all migrants who received humanitarian assistance had lost their jobs during the pandemic and were left without the means of subsistence. Many could not purchase air tickets and returned home with the support of fellow migrants.

Returned vulnerable migrants were provided with consultations to identify their vulnerabilities and current needs. Additionally, migrants were assisted with pre-departure activities such as requesting return certificate, those who have lost their travel documents were assisted with obtaining exit visas and resolving registration issues. Other support provided included organizing pre-departure medical examinations and completing PCR tests needed to travel back home.



Figure 1: Geographic coverage (direct assistance)

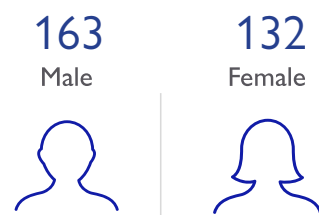


Figure 2: Share of respondents who received direct assistance, by gender



Figure 3: Share of migrants who received direct humanitarian assistance in the form of food and non-food items



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## DIRECT ASSISTANCE

Between October, 2020 and May, 2021, IOM Tajikistan worked in cooperation with seven implementing partners in Sughd Region, Khatlon Region, Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region, and in the Districts of Republican Subordination.

In total, 189 vulnerable migrants (124 male migrants, 65 female migrants) including four victims of human trafficking, and six families of Moldova who were stranded in Tajikistan, received assistance (in the form of a purchase demanded food and non-food products). Taking into account the epidemiological situation in the country, sanitary and hygienic supplies, including protective masks and sanitisers, were purchased for all the beneficiaries.

Beneficiaries were 20 to 55 years of age, and the vulnerable labour migrants had mostly been working in the Russian Federation (167), while others had been in Kazakhstan (8), Azerbaijan (2), India (4) and Turkey (2).

Vulnerable migrants were given consultations, during which their needs and vulnerabilities were identified, and gender-sensitive needs were taken into account. Other support provided included assistance in obtaining documents and assistance dealing with migration services.

The main vulnerabilities identified were among migrants who were subjected to violence, experienced humiliation, hunger and fear, those who have experienced domestic violence and abuse, those who had experienced losses of income as the result of COVID-19, those who lost their jobs during the pandemic and were left without a way to make a living.

It should be noted that specialists from the Migration Service, Departments for Women and Family Affairs, and the Centre for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings under the Ministry of Internal Affairs had been informed about the SDC project and took an active role in identifying and redirecting the target group of the project to NGOs.



Figure 4: Geographic coverage (direct assistance)

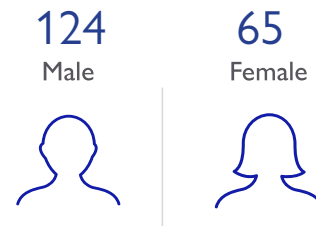


Figure 5: Share of respondents who received direct assistance, by gender



Figure 6: Share of migrants who received direct humanitarian assistance in the form of food and non-food items



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DIRECT ASSISTANCE

Between October 2020 – May 2021, IOM Kazakhstan provided assistance to vulnerable migrants in cooperation with eleven contracted NGOs across the Kazakh regions of Aktobe, Almaty, Karaganda/Temirtau, Kostanay, Kyzylorda, Nur-Sultan, Petropavlovsk, Shymkent, Taldykorgan, Uralsk, and Ust-Kamenogorsk.

In total, 230 vulnerable migrants (134 male migrants, 96 female migrants) aged 2 to 69 received assistance from IOM. This included food, NFIs, and assistance towards a voluntary return to their countries of origin.

Assisted voluntary return was provided to 110 vulnerable migrants (79 male migrants, 31 female migrants) aged 1 to 64, including 19 minors (11 boys/8 girls). Their countries of origin/destination were Uzbekistan (40), Moldova (38), the Russian Federation (17), Tajikistan (13), Ukraine (1), and Afghanistan (1).

Direct humanitarian assistance in the form of food and NFIs was provided to 120 vulnerable migrants (55 male migrants, 65 female migrants). Among these migrants were citizens from Uzbekistan (34), Tajikistan (32), Kyrgyzstan (25), the Russian Federation (15), Turkmenistan (13), and Afghanistan (1). It should be noted that assistance was also provided to their family members.

Vulnerable migrants were given consultations, during which their needs and vulnerabilities were identified. Other support provided included assistance in obtaining documents needed for migrants' return to their homeland, assistance dealing with migration services, obtaining exit visas, and paying duties, support to complete PCR tests and pre-departure medical examinations, and monitoring upon migrants' arrival home.

The main vulnerabilities identified were among migrants who had experienced losses of income due to lowered business activity as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic; those who had had an undocumented status in their host countries, those who had children or an ongoing pregnancy and could not access necessary services, those who were living with disabilities, and among those who had experienced domestic violence, exploitation, and/or human trafficking.



Figure 7: Geographic coverage (direct assistance)

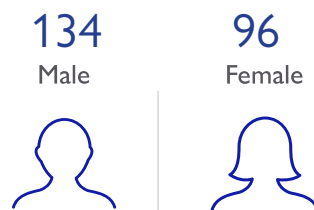


Figure 8: Share of respondents who received direct assistance, by gender

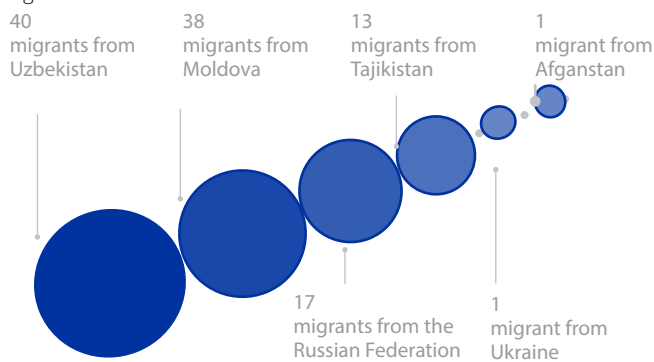


Figure 9: Share of migrants who received return assistance, by countries of origin/destination



Figure 10: Share of migrants who received direct humanitarian assistance in the form of food and non-food items,



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DIRECT ASSISTANCE

During the period of October 2020 – April 2021, IOM Moscow provided assistance to vulnerable migrants in cooperation with contracted NGOs across Moscow, Saint Petersburg, and Yekaterinburg,

IOM Moscow supported 647 migrants (457 male migrants, 190 female migrants) of Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova and Ukraine with up-to-date information and phone consultations. The majority of migrants (483) were given consultations on the following aspects of migration law: migration registration, temporary residence permits, citizenship, and voluntary return to the country of origin.

In Saint Petersburg, assistance was provided by IOM Moscow’s implementing partner, the Russian Red Cross. Humanitarian assistance was provided to 32 migrant families who had found themselves in extremely vulnerable financial situations due to losses of income as a result of measures introduced to contain the COVID-19 pandemic. These families were from Uzbekistan (9), Tajikistan (8), Kyrgyzstan (8), Ukraine (5), Azerbaijan (1), and Afghanistan (1).

Other types of humanitarian assistance provided included clothing and shoes for children and adults, sanitary and hygienic goods, baby food for infants, medicine for seriously ill migrants; payment for treatment (including chemotherapy); assistance to return home (including purchase of an air ticket and payment for the COVID-19 test).

In Yekaterinburg assistance was provided by IOM Moscow’s implementing partner Ural House. A total of 365 migrants were provided with humanitarian assistance, and 19 were provided with assistance to return to their home countries.

In cooperation with IOM Uzbekistan, the assisted voluntary return from the Russian Federation was provided to 76 vulnerable migrants (31 male migrants and 34 female migrants). Their ages range from 2 months to 78 years old. The majority of the cases were referred by the Agency for External Labour Migration of the Republic of Uzbekistan (AELM) and respective Consulates in the Russian Federation. Also, in collaboration with a partner-NGO ‘Tong Jahoni’ the humanitarian assistance such as food, medicines, warm socks, and blankets was provided to 313 vulnerable migrants (308 male migrants/ 5 female migrants).

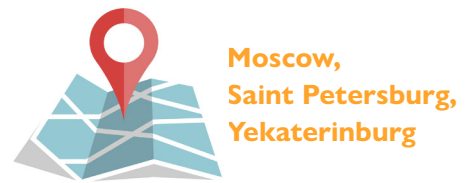


Figure 11: Geographic coverage (direct assistance)

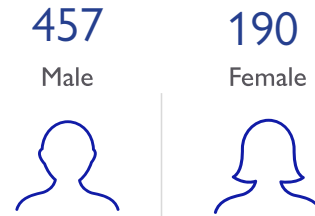


Figure 12: Share of respondents who received information support and phone consultation, by sex, Moscow

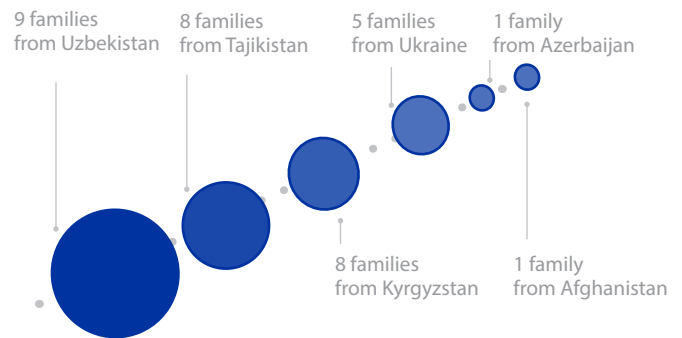


Figure 13: Share of migrant families who received direct humanitarian assistance (in the form of food and NFIs) by countries of origin, Saint Petersburg



Figure 14: Share of migrants who received direct humanitarian assistance in the form of food and non-food items, Yekaterinburg



**Migrant:** at the international level, no universally accepted definition of migrant exists. The term migrant is usually understood to cover all cases where the decision to migrate is taken freely by the individual concerned for reasons of “personal convenience” and without intervention of an external compelling factor. This term, therefore, applies to persons, and family members, moving to another country or region to improve material or social conditions and improve their own or their family prospects.

**Returnees (in Kyrgyzstan):** Kyrgyz nationals or Kyrgyz born citizens who returned to Kyrgyzstan after living for at least three consecutive months abroad and who returned during or after March 2020.

**Returnees (in Tajikistan):** Tajik nationals or Tajik born citizens who returned to Tajikistan after living for at least three consecutive months abroad and who returned during or after March 2020.

**Stranded migrant (in Kazakhstan):** 1) was identified as a migrant, 2) is currently located in any of the 12 regions of Kazakhstan and within the borders of Kazakhstan, 3) has been in Kazakhstan for over one month at the time of assessment, 4) has the intention to return to his/her country of origin, but is unable to do so.

**Stranded migrant (in the Russian Federation):** 1) was identified as a migrant, 2) is currently located in any of the three cities covered by this assessment and within the borders of the Russian Federation, 3) has been in the Russian Federation for over one month at the time of assessment, 4) has the intention to return to his/her country of origin, but is unable to do so.

**The Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM):** a system to track and monitor displacement and population mobility. It is designed to regularly and systematically capture, process and disseminate information to provide better understanding of the movements and evolving needs of displaced populations, whether on-site or en route.

*\*The definitions are used in conformity with IOM Glossary on Key Migration Terms and that the key terms above are used for operational purposes for this specific exercise*

Source: Glossary on Migration. International Migration Law No. 34, IOM, Geneva., available at <https://publications.iom.int/books/international-migration-law-ndeg34-glossary-migration>



The opinions expressed in the report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The designations employed and the presentation of material throughout the report do not imply expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of IOM concerning legal status of any country, territory, city or area, or of its authorities, or concerning its frontiers or boundaries.

IOM is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. As an intergovernmental organization, IOM acts with its partners in the international community to: assist in meeting the operational challenges of migration; advance understanding of migration issues; encourage social and economic development through migration; and uphold the human dignity and well-being of migrants.

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