

European Migration Crisis: Situation Update in Belgrade, Serbia

22 April 2016



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SITUATION UPDATE

Beginning on 20 April, officials from the national Commissariat for Refugees and Migration began to clear Luke Celovica Park in central Belgrade, a makeshift camp for migrants.

Accompanied by interpreters, Commissariat officials informed some 60-80 people that they were no longer allowed to sleep in the park and removed tents, blankets and plastic sheeting distributed by aid agencies. Officials arranged for a bus to transport migrants to Krnjaca asylum centre, 30 minutes from Belgrade, explaining to people that they would be able to access the asylum centre without registering intentions to apply for asylum. Migrants were also told that they would be able to leave the centre during the day. However, the majority appeared reluctant to leave, with only 26 of the 60-80 individuals present in the park at the time observed boarding the bus to Krnjaca.

By 21 April, **between 50-60 individuals were reported to have returned to the park, sleeping in the open with no shelter and blankets.** A further 50 individuals are reportedly staying in an abandoned building close to the river, in inadequate and unhygienic conditions. The vast majority intend to continue towards central Europe.

Population Profile

During the clearance on Wednesday afternoon, REACH assessment teams observed up to 80 individuals, including 4-5 families. The majority

Context

Luke Celovica Park is located across from the main bus terminal and train station in Belgrade and has long been a key transit hub for migrants arriving in Serbia from FYROM or Bulgaria through irregular means. Since the official closure of the Western Balkans migration route on 20 March, the park has also served as meeting point those stranded in Serbia and unable to continue their journey.

were from Afghanistan, while one family was reportedly from Iraq and another from Syria. Individuals from Pakistan and Algeria were also observed, mostly single males.

Those who boarded the bus to Krnjaca, included 18 Pakistanis, 2 Afghans and 8 Syrians, including three children and a pregnant woman. The group from Syria had just arrived to the park a few minutes prior to the start of the Commissariat's patrol. They had travelled from FYROM having spent one month in Tabanovtse transit site. They planned to leave the asylum centre the following morning for the Hungarian border.

Humanitarian presence in the park

The Serbian Red Cross reported that they would no longer provide assistance within the park from the 20 April. However, at the time of writing, two organisations were still present, MSF providing medical assistance and Asylum Info providing food and information to still staying in the park.



On 20 April authorities cleared a makeshift camp for migrants in Luke Celovica Park, central Belgrade



Luke Celovica Park prior to the clearance in March 2016