REINTEGRATION OF RETURNING FOREIGN TERRORIST FIGHTERS (RFTF) AND THEIR FAMILIES FROM CONFLICT ZONES
INTERVENTION FACTSHEET

Background
With regards to both reintegration and rehabilitation assistance, the Western Balkans and especially the concerned local communities need to be prepared to receive RFTF and their families, families of deceased FTF, and RFTF released from prisons in the Western Balkans.

They need to consider both the potential security threat of FTFs including those who have indirectly participated in the conflict, as returnees from conflict zones may not be prosecuted due to lack of evidence, and the particular needs of children who were born or spent formative years being brought up in conflict environment, witnesses to atrocities, and heavily influenced by the violent ideologies. Governments need to provide for specialized reintegration interventions, with security risk assessments and monitoring carried out on a case-by-case basis.

Scope of the factsheet
IOM is an active player in the area of reintegration, resocialisation and rehabilitation of returning foreign terrorist fighters (RFTF) and their families from conflict zones. The set of ongoing and planned interventions aim to support the host governments and institutions, receiving communities, and returnees in the complex issues surrounding RFTF returns. This factsheet will summarize the goals and activities so far and the future course of action.

Working with authorities:
The provision of reception and humanitarian assistance to returnees in December 2019 is an important milestone in IOM’s work in the area of reintegration of RFTF in WB. IOM has supported and participated in an inter-disciplinary coordination group responsible for providing an organized reception and return to the communities of origin.

Research on the reintegration needs of the families of returning foreign fighters was also conducted to outline the vulnerability profiles of families of foreign terrorist fighters in Kosovo*, their specific vulnerabilities and immediate, medium and longer-term reintegration needs, including medical and psychosocial support, legal aid, financial assistance, and other re-socialisation assistance. The research represented the first serious effort to investigate the living conditions of family members of foreign fighters in Kosovo*, their attitudes and needs towards reintegration, and the state-level and community responses to-date. Based on the best practice transfer model, baseline needs assessments for the reintegration of RFTF and their families, with a particular focus on the special needs of women, men, boys, and girls have been conducted in the rest of the region as well.

IOM has engaged the governments of other receiving host countries, and has followed the regional transfer model to expand activities to the wider Western Balkans region. IOM is working with governments and local authorities in the Western Balkans to draw from regional and international expertise to improve their preparedness to reintegrate and rehabilitate returnees from conflict zones. In the upcoming period, this will take the form of supporting authorities with capacity building and knowledge exchange on the

START DATE:
AUGUST 2020

IMPLEMENTED BY:
International Organization for Migration (IOM)

GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE:
Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Kosovo

BENEFICIARIES:
Governments, authorities, institutions
Host communities
Returning foreign terrorist fighters and their families

---

1 This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.
EU-WB level, and intra-regional level, and by supporting operationalizing of action plans for direct assistance of returnees. Where feasible, IOM will support community-based institution in developing case management systems for returnees.

Working with communities and returnees:
Based on the work with the BiH governments, IOM supported the establishment of the so-called mobile team made up of practitioners and frontline actors. The work of the new mobile team is expected to commence in June 2020, with the teams being able to access the host communities and returnees and provide tailored assistance, plus act as a direct information feedback mechanism for improving the interventions based on timely information.

IOM is directly contributing to the social cohesion aspects of reintegration, resocialisation and rehabilitation. IOM will be overseeing the implementation of grants aimed at promoting social cohesion in communities of return, using a direct implementation approach in some contexts and sub-contracting civil society in others, depending on existing capacities.

On the other hand, IOM will continue working on the community level to ensure returnees from conflict zones, including men, women, boys and girls, are accepted by their communities, and that they have access to humanitarian and reintegration assistance tailored to their needs. In Kosovo* and BiH, IOM is working closely with the ministries of interior to secure humanitarian assistance packages for families of returning foreign terrorist fighters. This field-tested model has provided lessons and best practices for expansion to the wider regions as well, based on local demand.