

# CONTEMPORARY MIGRANT CRISIS ON THE BALKAN ROUTE: CRIME CHALLENGES FOR SERBIA AND NORTH MACEDONIA

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**Purpose:** The Balkan route has caused security challenges for Serbia and North Macedonia. A huge number of refugees over time turned out to be a security issue. In the case of the mentioned states, it is important to point out that the Balkan route influenced the increase of criminal activities related to human trafficking and illegal transit routes. The purpose is to analyze movements through the Balkan route and define in which security domains this route has contributed to the disruption of existing security.

**Design/Methods/Approach:** Research relies on analysis, where content analysis, functional analysis, comparative analysis, and structural-functional analysis will be applied. It is also planned to use synthesis, abstraction, deduction, and induction in combination with rational choice techniques. The classification will be used when creating a typology of effective and ineffective state mechanisms in the period observed in the research, in accordance with the previous analysis.

**Findings:** Analyzing the mechanisms used by Serbia and North Macedonia in the fight against criminal activities on the Balkan route, we have found that the institutions of the mentioned states were effective during the migrant crisis. In the “cross-section” chapter, we are presenting the failures of the national mechanisms of Serbia and North Macedonia during the migrant crisis. In the third chapter, we are proposing practical options that could contribute to the process of facing Balkan route threats. The findings are valuable in the science of security in the context of small states and the necessity of the integrated cooperation of small states in dealing with modern security challenges and threats.

**Originality/Value:** Analyzing the Balkan route through the prism of crime explains the worth of the paper in the scientific sense, i.e., how much this crisis has contributed to the increase of criminal activities in the region and how the authorities of these states are dealing with it.

**Keywords:** migrant crisis, Balkan route, Serbia, North Macedonia, criminal activities.

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**Mitko Arnaudov**, PhD, has been engaged at the Institute of International Politics and Economics as a research associate since March 2022. His main research interests are international relations, Serbia’s relations with its neighbors, regional relations in the Balkans, neighborhood relations in the Western Balkans, contemporary Balkan history, European and Atlantic integration processes in the Western Balkans, and the Western Balkans’ relations with the European Union. In October 2021, Arnaudov received his PhD from the Faculty of Political Sciences, University of Belgrade, defending his doctoral thesis “Foreign Policy Strategy of the Republic of Macedonia from 2006 to 2015”.