



UNHCR staff member meets with a group of Ukrainian refugees in a tent set up at the support point managed by NGO Your Friends at the Grebneva Border Crossing Point. © UNHCR/Takashi Mori

Operational context

Since 24 February 2022, Latvia has received a high number of refugees from Ukraine, amounting to approximately 2% of Latvia's population. From the outset of the war in Ukraine, the Latvian Government and civil society have responded with steadfast solidarity towards refugees from Ukraine, including by facilitating access to rights and services on equal footing with Latvian citizens. Challenges facing refugees from Ukraine include access to long-term accommodation, psycho-social assistance and the availability of Latvian language courses.

As of 2023, Latvia is included in [the Ukraine Regional Refugee Response Plan](#), complementing the government-led response. The plan is coordinated by UNHCR and has been developed by 14 humanitarian organisations in Latvia.

Following the increase in refugee and migrant arrivals via Belarus to Lithuania, Latvia and Poland in 2021, Latvia has introduced a state of emergency limiting access to asylum, which has recently been extended to 10 August 2023.

KEY FIGURES

- **46,861** applications for temporary protection lodged by refugees from Ukraine since February 2022. Officially estimated presence: 32,882.
- **131** asylum applications lodged in Q1 2023

Working with partners

UNHCR [works closely with partners](#) to provide protection and support to refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless people in Latvia and to advocate for their inclusion in the society.



**I Want to Help
Refugees**

LATVIJAS
CILVĒKTIESĪBU
CENTRS
LATVIAN
CENTRE FOR HUMAN
RIGHTS



**Latvian
Centre for
Human
Rights**



**Shelter Safe
House**

Highlights of UNHCR's and partners' activities



COUNSELLING SERVICES

- UNHCR and partners provide information and legal counselling to new arrivals and refugees in-country about asylum procedures, access to temporary protection and access to rights and services, among other issues. From January through March, 210 asylum-seekers, refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection received individual legal counselling and support through UNHCR and partners.



MONITORING VISITS

- UNHCR and partners conducted 9 monitoring visits to border crossing points in Vientuli, Grebneva, Terehova and Silene, and as well as to more than ten accommodation sites for refugees in Riga, Balvi, Saulkrasti, Ludza and other locations. Refugees from Ukraine continue to be in need of information, basic assistance and other support at border crossing points.
- UNHCR conducted two visits to detention centres to assess the needs of asylum-seekers, which include families with children. UNHCR's position is that children should not be detained, and that alternatives to detention should be available in law and in practice.



INTEGRATION AND OUTREACH

- UNHCR and partners visited 9 municipalities in Latvia and met with more than 1,000 refugees from Ukraine. Some municipalities have recruited refugees from Ukraine to enhance assistance and to support inclusion.
- From January through March, the Information Centre in Riga managed by a UNHCR partner assisted nearly 500 refugees from Ukraine with information and referrals. The inquiries primarily relate to necessities as well as extracurricular activities for children, how to prolong visas and obtain or extend residence permits.
- In coordination with authorities, UNHCR has worked to enhance reception conditions, provide basic assistance and access to information about temporary protection for newly arrived refugees from Ukraine.
- UNHCR and partners have organized 7 support groups for 73 refugees and asylum-seekers from Eritrea, Turkey, Syria, Iran and Ukraine. Examples of topics discussed during these support group sessions include state support available to asylum-seekers, the applicable social welfare system, and availability of psychological support.



COORDINATION

- On 17 February, the Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRP) for Ukraine was launched in Latvia. The RRP outlines the multi-partner and multi-sector response strategy and financial requirements of UNHCR and 13 partners aiding refugees from Ukraine, complementing the government-led response. Coordination meetings are held on a monthly basis.
- On 10 March, UNHCR organized another inter-agency coordination meeting in Latvia with participation of 19 representatives from NGOs, UN agencies and relevant line ministries. The participants shared information on activities as highlighted challenges and needs faced by refugees from Ukraine. The participants also discussed joint fundraising activities and PSEA training.