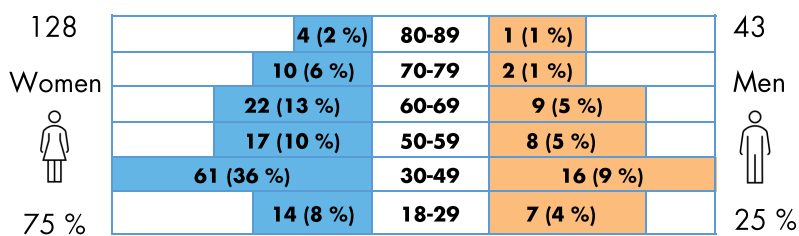


Background and methodology: In July 2023, UN Human Rights (OHCHR) in Moldova started protection monitoring as part of a project funded by the European Union Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid. OHCHR focuses on the systematic identification of those who are more at risk of protection concerns and human rights violations. OHCHR’s methodology consists of individual interviews with refugees from Ukraine and host community members. Respondents are reached through the facilitation of international and national NGOs and local CSOs that work with the most vulnerable groups on both banks of Nistru river. In order to ensure a wide geographical coverage, each month interviews are done in the northern, centre and southern regions of Moldova, including the Transnistrian region. Since the distribution of localities changes from month to month, it may not always be possible to compare data between different rounds of data collection. The analysis presented in the Factsheet refers to the respondents of the month for which it is published, therefore data may not always be representative of the refugee population as a whole. In addition, data reflects the self-reporting by respondents. OHCHR analyses the data, taking into account the existing legal framework and contextual information.

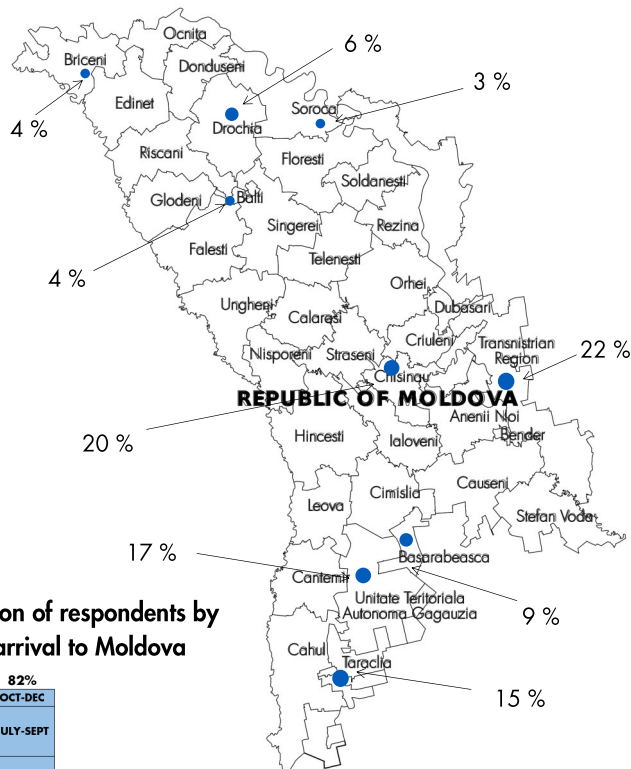
PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

In October 2023, **OHCHR interviewed 171 refugees from Ukraine** (75 % women; 25 % men). 167 of them were Ukrainian nationals and 4 respondents were Third-Country nationals (all Turks). Respondents were located in various regions of north, south, center parts of Moldova, including the Transnistrian region, as indicated in the map below. The largest age groups among the interviewed refugees were those aged 30-49, comprising 45 % of the respondents. Respondents from the Transnistrian region stated that their primary reasons for choosing to stay there, were the presence of family and friends and the proximity to Ukraine. The analysis of data collected reveals that refugees on both banks of Nistru river rather reside with relatives or close friends for free, highlighting the significance of family or social networks, with less than one-third of respondents opting for independently rented accommodation. Moreover, over half of the interviewed refugees from Ukraine in Moldova arrived with children, and 27% came alone, regardless of their residence location in Moldova. A correlation was noted between ethnicity and place of respondents’ residence. Those who self-identified as ethnic Russians predominantly live in the Transnistrian region, ethnic Bulgarians in Taraclia and UTA Gagauzia, Roma in Drochia, and all interviewed ethnic Turks in Chisinau.

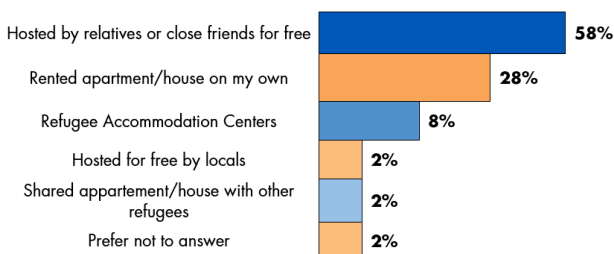
Distribution of respondents by age group and gender



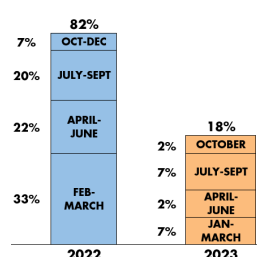
Distribution of respondents by region



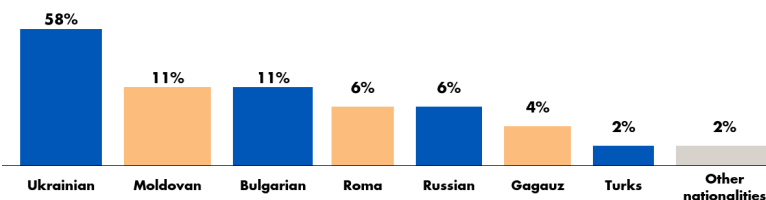
Distribution of respondents by accommodation type



Distribution of respondents by their arrival to Moldova



Distribution of respondents by their self-identification of ethnicity



IDENTIFICATION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

The protection monitoring tool included the Washington Group Short Set on Functioning, which obtains information on difficulties a person may have in undertaking basic functioning activities. The tool consists of one question per functional domain: visual, hearing, mobility, cognition, self-care, and communication (expressive and receptive) impairments. The analysis applies the criterion that a person is considered to have a disability if they respond with 'a lot of difficulty' or 'cannot do at all' for any of the functional domains.

11 % (=18 persons) of the interviewed refugees reported a lot of difficulties or impossibility to perform actions under one (15 persons) or several (3 persons) functional domains.

Percentage of respondents with difficulties per functional domain

2 % Visual	1 % Hearing	8 % Mobility	2 % Cognition*	1 % Self-care	0 % Communication

*In the Washington Group Short Set of Questions the cognition domain includes only remembering and concentrating

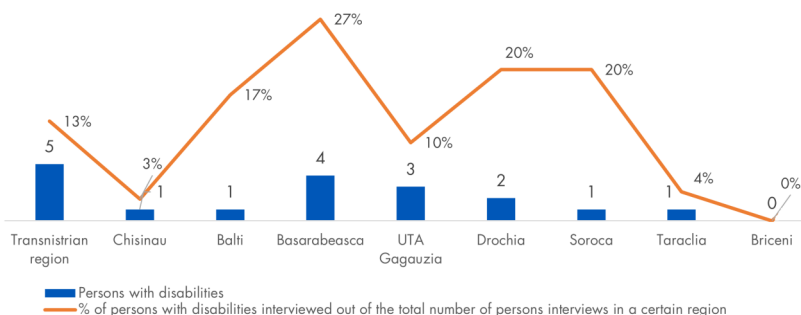
The decrease in the number of interviewed persons with disabilities this month, as experienced by OHCHR, is primarily attributable to challenges associated with conducting outdoor interviews in cold weather, but also to the changes in the NGOs that represent an entry point to monitoring.

Distribution of respondents with disabilities by age group

Age Group	Without Disability	With Disability
80-89	1 (100%)	0
70-79	2 (100%)	0
60-69	8 (89%)	1 (11%)
50-59	7 (88%)	1 (12%)
30-49	16 (100%)	0
18-29	7 (100%)	0

Gender	Without Disability	With Disability
Women	16	13
Men	2	5

Distribution of respondents with disabilities by region



- ⇒ The age groups 60-69 and 70-79 exhibit the highest prevalence of interviewed refugees with disabilities, primarily facing difficulties related to mobility.
- ⇒ Data reveal a higher rate of disability among interviewed refugee women compared to men. It is, however, important to note that this month OHCHR reached a lower number of persons with disabilities.
- ⇒ No correlation was found between ethnicity and disability.

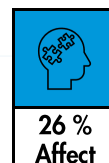
EXPERIENCE OF ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION

The protection monitoring tool included the enhanced questions of Washington Group focusing on the **affect domain** of functioning which involves emotional functions such as feelings of depression and anxiety. Data indicate that **53 % of the respondents experience feelings of anxiety, worry and nervousness** and **19 % feel depressed** on a daily or weekly basis. 46 % of interviewed refugees reported feelings of anxiety in a high intensity while 61 % expressed a similar intensity in relation to depression. These feelings were reportedly higher among **refugees with functional disabilities (83 % reported having anxiety and 39 % felt depressed)**.

A correlation was found between gender and experience of anxiety and disability, with women experiencing depression 4.8 times more frequently than men. Anxiety and depression are particularly prevalent among individuals aged 60 and older, which suggests a need for psychosocial support for older refugees. When comparing the left and right banks of Nistru River, interviewed refugees on the left bank more frequently reported experiencing anxiety and depression.

Experience anxiety, nervousness and depression by age groups

	18-29	30-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80-89
% of total respondents by age group who reported ANXIETY	24%	51%	64%	71%	50%	40%
% of total respondents by age group who reported DEPRESSION	10%	19%	20%	29%	17%	0%



Data reveals that **26 %** of interviewed refugees from Ukraine have **difficulties with affect domain**.

MEDICAL SERVICES: ACCESS AND BARRIERS

45 % of respondents (77 individuals out of 171, including 58 women and 19 men) **reported suffering from serious medical conditions.** These conditions include a variety of chronic and non-communicable diseases, with a focus on various bodily systems such as the heart, vision, musculoskeletal, gynecological, neurological, and gastrointestinal tract systems. Severe medical conditions are predominant among refugees with disabilities, affecting **16 out of the 18 interviewed.** Both women and men reported comparable rates of health issues, regardless of their place of residence. Serious medical conditions are prevalent among **81 % of respondents aged 60 years and older.**

The age distribution of interviewed people with serious medical conditions

	18-29	30-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80-89
# of respondents reported having serious medical issues	3	25	15	21	9	4
% of total respondents by age group	14%	32%	60%	68%	75%	80%

16 % (=12) of the refugees who reportedly suffer from serious medical conditions also reported facing challenges in accessing medical services in Moldova.

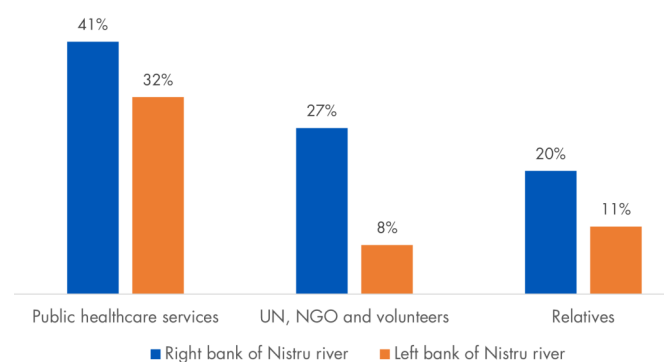
Data indicates that the majority of 77 respondents with serious medical conditions did not face challenges in accessing medical services. Out of the 12 respondents* who suffer from a serious medical condition and also face challenges in accessing medical services, 11 encountered obstacles when seeking secondary healthcare services, 8 experienced difficulties accessing primary healthcare services, and 2 faced challenges in obtaining emergency medical assistance. The primary challenge highlighted by respondents is the cost of medical care, predominantly secondary healthcare. Other challenges included poor quality of medical care, unavailability of medical facilities or services, refusals to provide medical assistance, and extended waiting times.

*This question allows a multiple-choice answer

Among the 18 refugees experiencing challenges in one or more functional domains, **4** of them (representing 22%) have **a disability certificate issued in Ukraine.** All four individuals reported suffering from a severe medical condition, and none of them indicated facing difficulties in obtaining medical assistance in Moldova.

Data found different patterns in health care provision between the right and left banks of Nistru River highlighting distinct patterns in healthcare assistance sources. The percentage of interviewed refugees who rely on public healthcare seems higher on the right bank compared to the left bank. In terms of external support, the respondents from the right bank demonstrate greater dependence on UN, NGO, and volunteers compared to those who reside on the left bank. However, the distribution of humanitarian aid is not equal between the two banks of Nistru river. 13 % of respondents from the left bank indicated that they required medical assistance but were not receiving it, as opposed to 8 % of respondents from the right bank.

Provision of medical assistance by source and place of residence



Out of 171 interviewed refugees from Ukraine in Moldova, **43 % (73 individuals) were registered with a family doctor.** This registration is disproportionately higher on the right bank of Nistru River (41%) compared to the Left bank (8%). Among those who registered with a family doctor, the majority (55 individuals) had a Temporary Protection ID, while the remaining 18 lacked that legal status. Their registration with a family doctor may be attributed to having another legal status in Moldova or being registered in private clinics. Interestingly, 13 % of respondents still rely on their connections with family doctors from Ukraine and have not registered in Moldova. Additionally, it is noteworthy that half of the individuals with Temporary Protection IDs are not registered with a family doctor.

URGENT NEEDS AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION



Medical care, including medicines, diagnostics, and assistive devices represent the most urgent needs for interviewed refugees (including for those with serious medical conditions and those with a disability). These needs are particularly high among persons with disabilities. The majority of respondents expressed a need to access primary healthcare, followed by secondary healthcare, and few respondents mentioned a need for emergency medical assistance. Lack of information on how to access medical care remains an issue.



Food is the second most urgent need, including meat, fresh fruits and vegetables.



Non-food items are the third most urgent needs, including winter clothing for adults and children, bedding items, hygiene kits.



Cash assistance, together with information on the reasons for delays with payments is still an open need for the majority of respondents on the both banks of Nistru river.



Regarding the urgent need of information, respondents informed that they were looking for information about **job opportunities, their legal status in Moldova, how to access psychological counseling and how to renew lost or expired documents.**



- 74 %

During the interviews, refugees from Ukraine were asked about their preferred sources for receiving information. 74 % of respondents, irrespective of their gender, age, or location, favor using their phones as their primary source. Additionally, 52 % of the interviewed refugees opt for social media as their preferred information channel, with 30 % of respondents mentioning family and friends as their third preferred source. Organizational websites were cited by 7 % of respondents. Receiving information in person or via governmental websites were each selected by only 1 % of respondents, making them the least preferred channels among refugees from Ukraine.



- 52 %



- 30 %

ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT

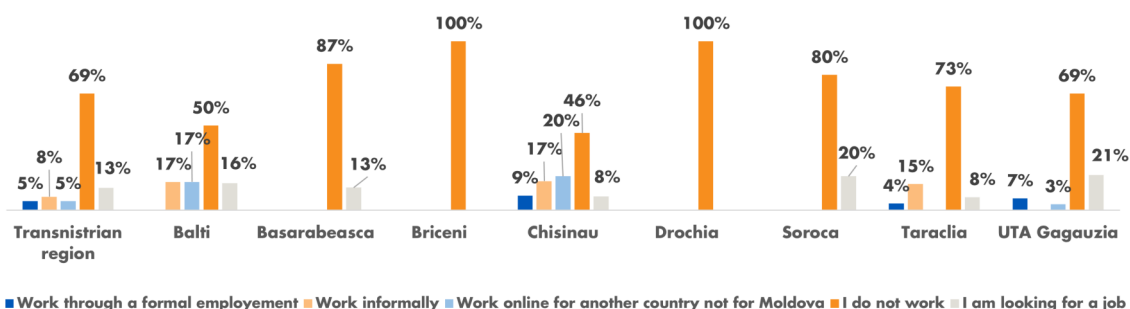
87 % (149 out of 171) of the interviewed refugees from Ukraine are currently not employed in Moldova. Of the 13 % of the respondents (17 women, 5 men) who are currently working in Moldova, 5 % have a formal employment and 8 % an informal one. No variations emerged between refugees residing on the right (11 %) and left (13 %) banks of Nistru River, with 13 % of residents from both banks actively engaged in employment in Moldova.

Among the 149 respondents not currently employed in Moldova, only 20 (13 %) are actively seeking employment, whereas 11 respondents (6 %) are engaged in online work for another country.

The main reasons behind the refugees' decision **NOT to seek employment in Moldova** are:

- ⇒ **Aging, Disabilities and Health issues:** A significant number of respondents, particularly pensioners (37 %), cited age as a factor limiting their ability to work. Certain respondents highlighted disabilities (12) or health concerns (5) as obstacles to employment.
- ⇒ **Family and Caregiver Responsibilities:** Individuals (all women) mentioned that responsibilities such as taking care of sick relatives (5), children care (10), and looking after hosts they lived with (2), impacted their participation in the workforce.
- ⇒ **Location, Availability of Work and Language Barriers:** 4% of respondents mentioned a lack of job opportunities in their current place of residence including a long commute to work. Some respondents emphasized the need to learn Romanian before seeking employment.
- ⇒ **Legal Constraints (Documents in the Transnistrian region):** Challenges in getting hired allegedly due to discriminatory practices or specific requirements for having the registration in the Transnistrian region were reported.

Diversity in employment situation by regions



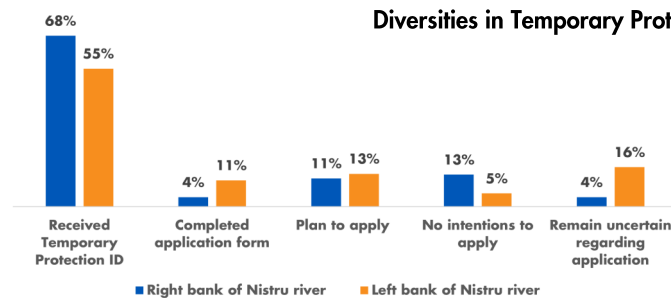
The graph illustrates that the regions with the highest employment of refugees are the Transnistrian region, Chisinau, Taraclia and Gagauzia.

TEMPORARY PROTECTION

The majority of respondents (71 %, 121 out of 171) applied for Temporary Protection in Moldova.

Among the applicants were 93 women and 28 men. There is a slight disparity (13 %) in the application rates for Temporary Protection between the right bank (72 %) and the left bank (66 %) of Nistru River. This suggests a shift in the observed application patterns among refugees from Ukraine based on their location in Moldova, compared to previous months. More residents of the left bank of Nistru River seem to now initiate applications for Temporary Protection. This can be explained by the organization of dedicated registration fairs facilitated by humanitarian partners, with the provision of support in online registrations. **93 % of the interviewed applicants (112 out of 121) received the Temporary Protection ID.** The remaining 9 successfully completed the online registration form and are currently awaiting their appointments at the IGM Office. No applicants reported difficulties with the application process.

81 of the interviewed refugees from Ukraine (29 % of the total interviewed) did not apply for Temporary Protection where 40 % of them plan to apply in future, 38 % do not intend to apply and 22 % remain uncertain about application for Temporary Protection in Moldova. Data suggest no specific correlation between respondents based on their sex, age or ethnicity and intentions of applying for Temporary Protection. The primary reason mentioned by respondents intending to apply is that Temporary Protection was not a priority for them previously. Meanwhile, 10 interviewed refugees from Ukraine who do not intend to apply for Temporary Protection, reported that they had already applied or received a different type of residency. All of them reside on the right bank of Nistru river.



The graph highlights a slight disparity in the number of interviewed Ukrainian refugees who applied for Temporary protection based on their residence in Moldova. Notably, respondents residing on the left bank who have not applied yet, have more intentions or thoughts about the application process.

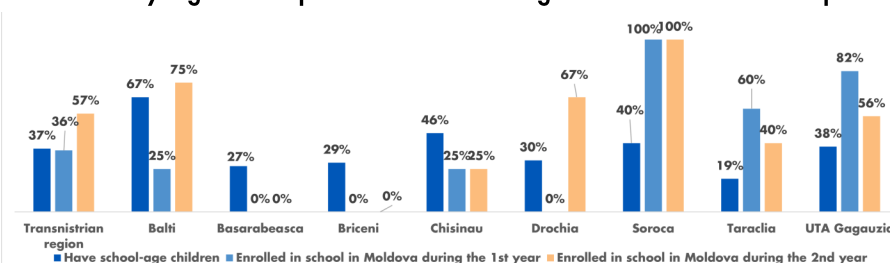
EDUCATION

Among the respondents who have school-age children, grandchildren, or nephews (61 out of 171 individuals), **36 % stated that their children were enrolled in Moldovan schools during their first year in Moldova.**

The number of school enrollment **increased in the second year in Moldova**, when **43 % of respondents with school-age children enrolled their children in school.** There was no observed disparity in the enrollment rates between the different banks of Nistru River while the enrollment rate on the right bank increased compared with the previous months. This increase can be explained by the entry into force of the Temporary Protection legal status.

The majority of schools selected by respondents for their children in Moldova conduct teaching in Russian language on both banks of Nistru river, with a few offering education in Romanian on the right bank and Ukrainian on the left bank. The primary reason for not enrolling children in Moldovan schools during both the first and second years was a **preference for online or remote learning using the Ukrainian curriculum; this was expressed by 86 % of the respondents.**

Distribution by region of respondents with school-age children and enrollment process



The graph illustrates varying enrollment trends in different regions of Moldova. It suggests that during the second school year, enrollment rates increased in the Transnistrian region, Balti, and Drochia, while in Taraclia and UTA Gagauzia, the rates decreased. OHCHR did not identify specific reasons for this.

INTENTIONS

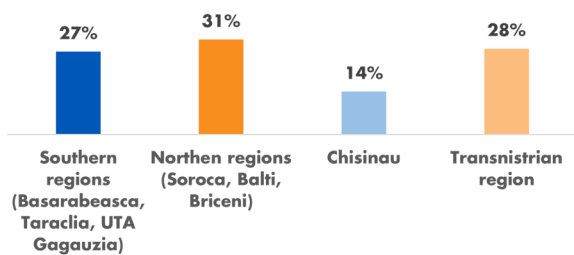
Among the surveyed refugees from Ukraine, **74 % express their intention to return to Ukraine in the future**, while 8 % do not wish to return, and an additional 18 % remain uncertain about their future intentions.

97 refugees, predominantly women, have occasionally or frequently visited Ukraine for personal reasons, including obtaining medicine or health consultations with specialists. Among these, 64 % have been granted Temporary Protection status in Moldova.

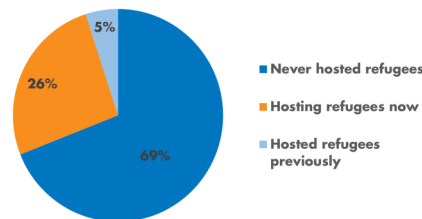
HOST COMMUNITIES

OHCHR started interviewing members of the host community in Moldova to assess if and how various spheres of their life, including demographics, education, employment, healthcare, and social cohesion were impacted by the arrival of refugees from Ukraine. OHCHR considers as host communities Moldovan citizens, including those hosting refugees from Ukraine in their houses. In October 2023, **OHCHR interviewed 100 host community members**, comprising of 62 women and 38 men, representing various regions across the country as indicated in the graph below. The most representative age groups were 30-49 and 60-69. Individuals self-identifying as ethnic Russians were primarily concentrated in the Transnistrian region, while those of Bulgarian and Gagauz ethnicity were more prevalent in the south of the country. In Chisinau, residents predominantly identified as Moldovan, whereas in the north, a significant number of respondents considered themselves equally as ethnic Ukrainians and Moldovans.

Distribution of respondents by region



Local hosting experience



Out of 31 respondents with hosting experience, 22 respondents hosted their relatives for free, others hosted non-relatives. 23 out of 31 reported receiving different kinds of humanitarian aid or support for hosting refugees including cash assistance, food kits, gas compensation.



EDUCATION

Among local respondents, **42 % have school-age children, grandchildren, or nephews**, with predominant representation in the south and north of Moldova. The host communities' perceptions on changes in education due to the arrival of refugees from Ukraine varied. While some (5 %) felt mistreated by the school irrespective of refugee influence, the majority of respondents (95 %) believed that the overall situation had not worsened or changed. While some acknowledged an increased workload for school personnel, others consider that the arrival of refugee children had had a minimal impact on the education system. Many respondents indicated a lack of awareness of the presence of refugee children in school or lack of interaction with refugee families.



EMPLOYMENT

The responses to the question on perceived changes in the labor sphere due to the arrival of refugees from Ukraine revealed a wide range of perspectives. While a significant number of respondents (88 %) reported not noticing any discernible change, a few expressed uncertainty (3 %) or opted not to answer (1 %). Positive views were provided only by woman (3 %), who **emphasized the introduction of new specialists on the labor market from the refugee community, creating a healthy competition and providing consumers with choices**. Conversely, negative observations, provided by both man and women (5 %) centered **around concerns of job deprivation, price reduction in the labor market, and dissatisfaction** with all efforts around refugees and their employment while many locals were unemployed and struggled to find a job.

MEDICAL SERVICES



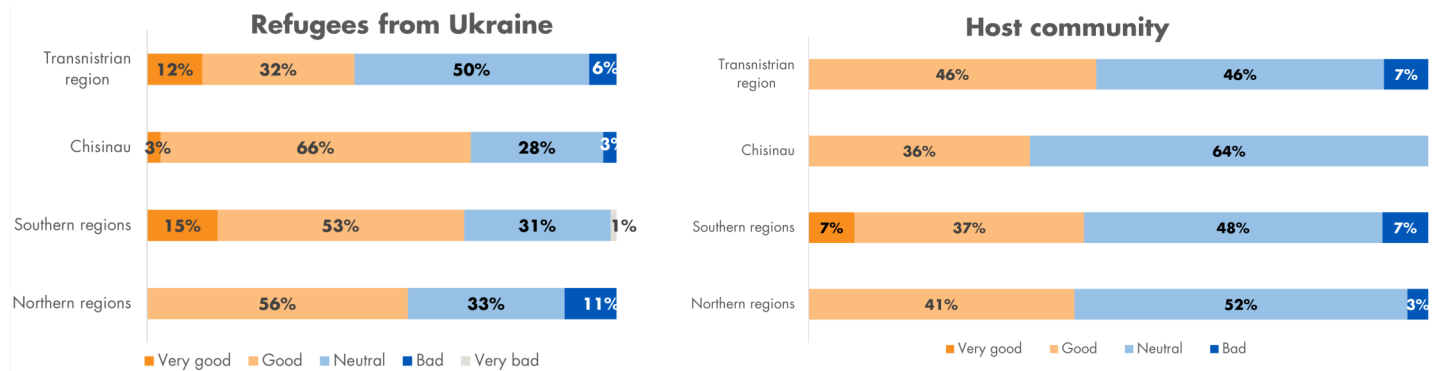
The evaluation of medical care quality in Moldova by Moldovan citizens reflected a nuanced perspective, with 70 % deeming it average. Concerns included disparities in specialist availability in private clinics, high healthcare costs, and inefficiencies in state clinics. Challenges such as the shortage of specialists, long queues, and the need for residents from other regions to seek care in Chisinau further underscored existing issues. Notably, **63 % of respondents from host communities perceived no changes in healthcare post-refugee arrival**.

On the right bank of Nistru river, 21 % of both men and women expressed economic concerns, citing high healthcare costs, while 39 % note prolonged wait times. Moreover, 40 % of interviewed locals reported an increased doctor workload due to refugees from Ukraine, and 29 % believed refugees paid for medical treatment. On the left bank of Nistru river, 27 % of both genders acknowledged high healthcare costs. However, 36 % criticized the low quality of medical care in the Transnistrian region in comparison with Chisinau and rest of Europe, and 24 % noted increased queues, indicating heightened demand. Overall, these responses highlight the multifaceted challenges and varying perceptions of healthcare quality and changes following the refugee influx, with notable gender similarities in expressed concerns.

SOCIAL COHESION: HOST COMMUNITIES AND REFUGEES

OHCHR monitoring includes a component aimed at assessing the level of social cohesion between refugees from Ukraine and the local population, through the perceptions that both groups have on interactions and relationships between them. Overall, activities aimed at promoting refugees' integration in the host communities, and social cohesion between the two groups, continued to be relevant.

Respondents' perceptions of the quality of the relationship between refugees from Ukraine and local



PERCEPTION OF REFUGEES FROM UKRAINE ON THE QUALITY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN REFUGEES AND MOLDOVANS

Northern regions:

The region showcases diverse experiences of interactions between refugees and local communities, from positive ones to underlying tensions or open dissatisfaction. Refugees have mixed perceptions, and some of them have felt animosity and blame for their status of beneficiaries of humanitarian aid.

⇒ *"Locals tolerate us, although they feel offended because they help us but do not receive assistance from the government."*
 Woman, 43 years old, Briceni

Southern regions:

For the most part, positive interactions and examples of integration of refugees in the communities were recorded. In a few instances, refugees felt that they were perceived negatively due to alleged preferential treatment by locals.

⇒ *"The locals may be unhappy with having us here, but they do not say anything"*
 Woman, 76 years old, Taraclia

Chisinau:

Positive aspects include reports of a welcoming attitude and offers for support by local communities, while challenges involve occasional reproach and expressions of discontent by Moldovans, potentially motivated by different political views.

⇒ *"The locals say that we have come in large numbers, but I am sharing humanitarian aid with the locals who are in need."*
 Woman, 41 years old, Chisinau

Transnistrian Region:

Positive aspects include experience of harmonious coexistence, assistance, and good relationships with local communities. However, challenges persist, including conflicts, domestic issues, and instances where locals express a lack of respect for refugees.

⇒ *"We try to be quiet, do not listen to loud music, do not drink, try to be less visible to the locals."*
 Woman, 40 years old, Transnistrian region

PERCEPTION OF MOLDOVANS ON THE QUALITY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN REFUGEES FROM UKRAINE AND MOLDOVANS

Northern regions:

Despite a predominantly positive sentiment, concerns about the prioritization of refugees over local communities and a desire for better integration emerge.

⇒ *"Friendly, but in our hearts, it hurts that refugees are more important than us. Refugees are helped with medical assistance for free, but Moldovans should be paid."*

Woman, 53 years old, Briceni

⇒ *"I think it will be better for both, them and us, if the war ends and they leave. They are strangers to us."*

Woman, 70 years old, Balti

Southern regions:

Mixed perceptions with both positive and negative experiences.

⇒ *"Initially the relationships between refugees and locals were good, but now the refugees have turned local people against themselves by their behaviour."*

Man, 71 years old, Taraclia

Chisinau:

Overall positive interactions, but concerns about refugees' behavior and reluctance to consider them as refugees.

"I think that the locals are very kind, but the refugees are arrogant and ungrateful, they don't want to work, our pensioners are worse off than they are here."

Man, 37 years old, Chisinau

Transnistrian Region:

Some expressed frustration over perceived unfair benefits, contrasting living conditions, and a belief that refugees should address their problems, while others note improved behavior over time, emphasize cultural similarities and express readiness to help.

⇒ *"Refugees do not work, we are most outraged by this, and they receive benefits of 150 euros. My pension is 80 euros, I live worse than refugees, why do they have everything, but nothing for us?"*

Woman, 62 years old, Transnistrian region

PATTERNS OF DISCRIMINATION/NEGATIVE ATTITUDE BASED ON PROTECTED GROUNDS

REFUGEE STATUS

20 % of interviewed refugees reported that they had faced negative attitudes because of their refugee status.

- ⇒ Refugees from Ukraine interviewed in the northern regions of Moldova reported facing a negative attitude in higher proportion (33 %) compared to those residing in other regions, including Chisinau (17 %), southern regions (16 %), and the Transnistrian region (8 %). It is interesting to note that the lower level of reported negative attitude is in the Transnistrian region.
- ⇒ A gender disparity in the negative perception of refugees from Ukraine was noted, with men expressing a lower level (9%) compared to women (19 %).
- ⇒ Data suggest that instances of public hostility, including verbal abuse, shouting, and conflicts, particularly in the northern and southern regions, contributing to a challenging environment for refugees, while hate speech, negative attitudes from officials, and reproach for receiving assistance from the local communities, fosters an atmosphere of tension and resentment.

"There are conflicts at the everyday level, everyone here is already tired of us [refugees from Ukraine]."

Woman, 36 years old, Chisinau

"A mayor's office volunteer disrespectfully questioned our presence, urging us to go home, denying the existence of war, and spreading rumors about refugees."

Woman, 55 years old, Soroca

SOCIAL MEDIA MONITORING

"Even if this money is from the UN, why is it spent on refugees and not on our [Moldovan] homeless"

"We ourselves do not have enough jobs. I am against hiring them"

"We do not want any refugees [from other countries], we are already tired of Ukrainians"

"Ukrainians came in expensive cars, rent expensive apartments, why should they work with us?"

The key findings of social media monitoring (Viber, TikTok, Telegram, Facebook) related to refugees from Ukraine in October 2023 concerned:

Economic Impact:

- ⇒ Resentment towards refugees perceived as influencing housing prices.
- ⇒ Negative comments linking refugees from Ukraine to job scarcity and high salaries.
- ⇒ Refusal of banks to provide services based on nationality, indicating unequal treatment.

Government Support:

- ⇒ Criticism of the government's allocation of resources to aid refugees.
- ⇒ Calls for prioritizing citizens over refugees from Ukraine in financial assistance.
- ⇒ Public frustration expressed about previous refugee influx and government response.

Social Integration:

- ⇒ Negative reactions towards discussions on hosting more refugees, reflecting fatigue.
- ⇒ Skepticism and resistance towards Ukrainian women from seeking employment in Moldova due to lack of the job places for local residents.

Financial Assistance:

- ⇒ Highlighting socioeconomic disparities, local discontent reveals frustration among pensioners, who criticize the perceived misuse of refugee assistance, citing instances of purchasing non-essential items and questioning the equity of aid distribution compared to local salaries.

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights is grateful for support in facilitating the interviews to OSORC; NRC; NGO 'Zdorovyi Gorod'; International Blue Crescent Relief and Development Foundation (IBC), Moldova For Peace.

For any questions, please reach out Martina Gastaldello, Human Rights Officer, OHCHR Moldova, martina.gastaldello@un.org

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