QUARTERLY SOCIAL LISTENING REPORT

FROM JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2024

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This report is issued by InfoUnit, a project implemented by A.O. “Laolaltă” for the civic initiative “Moldova for Peace”, with the support of the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR).

Regional Refugee Response for the Ukraine Situation

UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency

MOLDOVA FOR PEACE

LAOLALTĂ

DISCLAIMER

This report presents an analysis of refugee and local community social media posts or threads shared via online social media sources.

Between July and September 2024, the InfoUnit collected 2.868 posts or threads, monitored over 108.590 posts, posted 46 informative updates covering topics like temporary protection, medical services, cash assistance, and legal issues, addressed 2.779 questions, and shared information about over 400 free events, training sessions, courses accessible to both refugee and host communities, and other.

Rumors and information spread quickly among the communities and can have serious consequences. Tracking social media enables humanitarian organizations and various stakeholders to stay informed about community discussions and tackle any misinformation that may arise. Information monitoring also helps identify gaps or deficiencies in the humanitarian response.
In this report, the term "Refugees" applies to individuals displaced from Ukraine — including those seeking protection in Moldova, temporary protection, asylum seekers, refugee status, or others.
This report is part of the Accountability to Affected People (AAP) mechanisms of the Refugee Coordination Forum (RCF) in Moldova.

ACCESS TO ACCURATE INFORMATION

The InfoUnit continuously provided verified information on legal matters, including legal status, and redirected legal cases to The Law Center of Advocates (CDA), ACTED, IOM MOLDOVA, and others. Additionally, InfoUnit disseminated information about humanitarian aid programs, education, employment opportunities, medical services, and more.

- **No artificial intelligence used**: Collecting data manually provides a deeper context understanding. If the context is nuanced, it requires a human touch.
- **No personal data collected**: We do not collect any personal data and all the information is examined to ensure the anonymity of respondents.
- **Context analysis**: Posts and threads are provided alongside contextual information to give insight into the environment in which it was shared.
- **Quantitative analysis and categorization**: The information is grouped based on the assistance or services that were the subject of discussion.

OUR RESOURCES

- **Ajutor Ucraineni in Moldova**: the biggest help Facebook group for refugees in Moldova. Partners can post information about their assistance aid programs.
- **Українці Молдова**: informational Telegram channel launched by InfoUnit.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SOURCES OF MEDIA POSTS OR THREADS.... 4
FEEDBACK ANALYSIS.... 4
FEEDBACK ANALYSIS: CASH ASSISTANCE 48%.... 4
UNHCR CASH ASSISTANCE FOR REFUGEES IN MOLDOVA 42 %.... 4
UNHCR CASH ASSISTANCE PROGRAM CHANGES 42%.... 5
OPERATIONAL ISSUES 27%.... 6
VERIFICATION INTERVIEW 16%.... 7
UNHCR CASH ASSISTANCE HELPLINE (CASH HOTLINE) 13%.... 8
OTHER CASH ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS FOR REFUGEES IN MOLDOVA 6 %.... 9
CASH ASSISTANCE PROGRAM IN THE TRANSNISTRIAN REGION.... 9
CASH ASSISTANCE FOR HOST FAMILIES.... 10
OTHER CASH ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS (Action Against Hunger, Caritas, World Vision, Acted, People in Need, CRS).... 11
FEEDBACK ANALYSIS: LEGAL STATUS 31%.... 13
FEEDBACK ANALYSIS: BORDER AND ADMINISTRATIVE LINE CROSSING 7%.... 15
FEEDBACK ANALYSIS: EDUCATION 5%.... 17
FEEDBACK ANALYSIS: FOOD/NON-FOOD ITEMS 5%.... 18
FEEDBACK ANALYSIS: HOUSING 3%.... 20
FEEDBACK ANALYSIS: SECURITY 2%.... 21
FEEDBACK ANALYSIS: HEALTHCARE 2%.... 22
FEEDBACK ANALYSIS: EMPLOYMENT 1%.... 23
ABOUT US.... 25
CONTACTS.... 25

SOURCES OF MEDIA POSTS OR THREADS

22 Viber groups

18 Telegram groups and channels

14 Online mass media

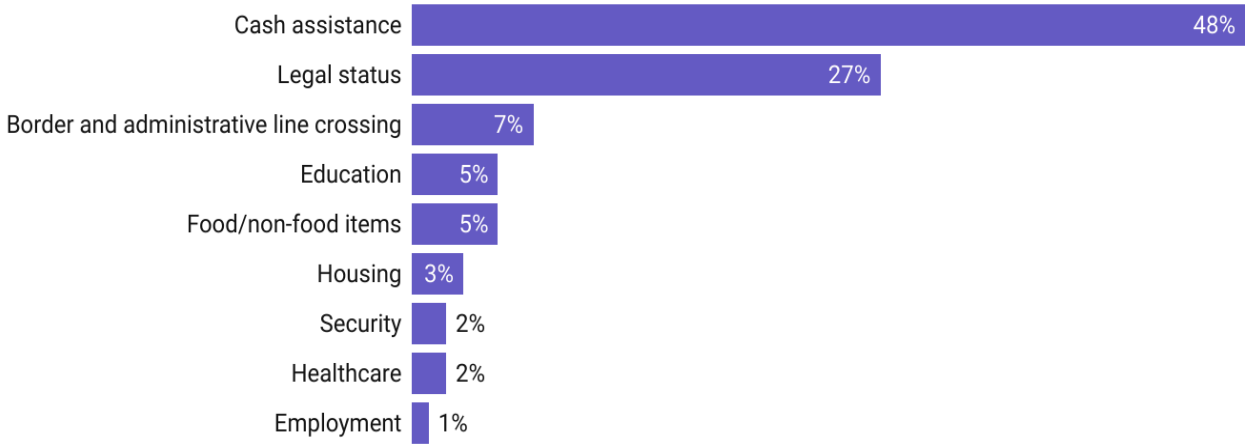
2 Facebook groups and pages

200.000+ TOTAL MEMBERS OF REFUGEE AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES MONITORED AND REACHED

The specified period contains data from the sources mentioned above, which have been distributed as follows in the chart. The chart illustrates the distribution of messaging platform usage.

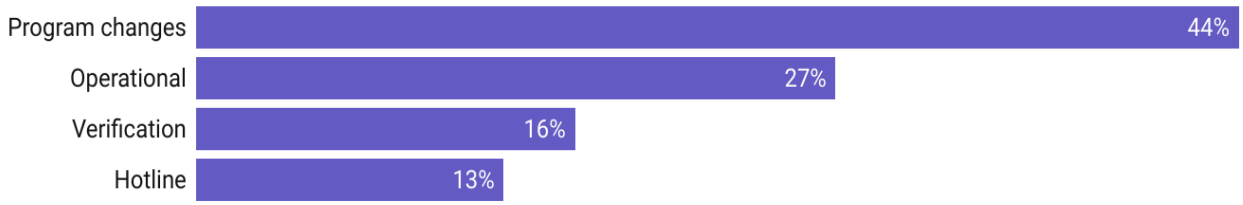
FEEDBACK ANALYSIS

During the reporting period a total of 2.868 social media posts and threads were collected.



FEEDBACK ANALYSIS: CASH ASSISTANCE 48%

UNHCR CASH ASSISTANCE FOR REFUGEES IN MOLDOVA 42 %[1]



[1] 42% UNHCR Cash assistance Program feedback, out of 48% collected feedback on Cash assistance programs.

UNHCR CASH ASSISTANCE PROGRAM CHANGES 42%[2]

In July, the main topic of discussion was UNHCR payments and their delays under new participation rules[3]. Refugees questioned whether payments would be made that month, shared updates on delays, and discussed SMS notifications regarding the approval or denial of financial assistance.
Another significant topic was the selection criteria for payments, with refugees engaging in discussions and seeking clarity regarding their existence and transparency. Following SMS notifications of denial, many refugees began discussing the appeals process and the challenges of submitting applications[4].

In August, the main issues were delays and discontinuation of payments for some refugees, as well as confusion about the selection criteria. Delays and discontinuation of payments raised questions about the appeals process and selection criteria.
Housing issues, financial constraints, delays regarding the verification process, and sometimes insufficient information made the situation more difficult.
The unclear verification process, in the refugee's opinion vague selection criteria, and poor communication between UNHCR and beneficiaries were seen as problems by the refugees.

In September, it was discussed that many beneficiaries had their payments stopped, and not all received notifications about their discontinuation from the program after the verification process, which caused confusion, especially among families with children and pensioners. Refugees believed that communication between cash program beneficiaries and the UNHCR representatives could have been improved and more effective, as many were left confused by the information regarding eligibility criteria and the details provided by the hotline. UNHCR provided information on eligibility criteria used in the process, but not information on individual cases.

Additionally, the financial challenges faced by many were worsened by payment delays and the lack of clear timelines, heightening concerns about their ability to make ends meet.

Examples of comments translated into English:

" - Does anyone have information regarding the new criteria for UNHCR payments?
- No one has it; wait for a response; everyone will receive it."

" What are the selection criteria for receiving financial assistance? We received a denial, and we went through the appeal process and a second interview (myself as the mother and my 5-year-old child), but I still don't know what categories can receive cash assistance. Also, there are known cases where a person, even without Temporary Protection, has moved forward and is receiving assistance. How can this be explained?"

"I also received a message that I did not pass. Can anyone tell me for sure, am I still supposed to receive the payment for June? Or is it only those who passed further?"

"Could someone please let me know who has filed an appeal regarding the UN's decision on assistance? Are there any responses coming in?"

"Good afternoon. I live with my elderly sick mother (81 years old) in a rented apartment. I am 57 y.o. At the time of verification in May, I was not working. We were denied financial assistance. I am now working, but with a low salary. I filed an appeal, but there has been no response yet. We cannot return home. How can we live without financial assistance?"

[2] On April 29, 2024, UNHCR announced changes to its Cash Assistance Program, updating eligibility criteria.
[3] UNHCR uses a scoring system to assess vulnerabilities and needs.
[4] If refugees feel they missed presenting an important factor during their assessment interview, they can inform UNHCR through the Complaint Online Form for review and follow-up.

OPERATIONAL ISSUES 27%

In July, discussions primarily focused on payment delays and uncertainty surrounding future assistance. Issues with appeals and verification further intensified concerns, as many refugees believed these processes were contributing to the delays in receiving payments.
Many refugees rely on this assistance, which deepenes their financial challenges. Some refugees shared their experiences with mobile teams that visited for on-site data verification, mentioning communication difficulties.
Other topics discussed included the impact of temporary protection status on receiving payments, where to submit applications for the first time, and whether those who had received aid in other countries could still qualify for assistance in Moldova.

In August, many refugees questioned the eligibility and registration process with UNHCR, particularly about updating personal information like passport details. They sought clarity on the timeline for receiving assistance and expressed uncertainty about aid eligibility criteria, especially concerning temporary protection status. There were also discussions about payment timing and the duration funds would remain available on cards, revealing inconsistencies in payment arrivals.
Confusion about August payments continued, with mixed reports on whether individuals received funds.
Refugees also highlighted concerns over insufficient communication, including missed SMS notifications and reliable hotline information.

In September, refugees raised questions regarding their registration status for UNHCR financial assistance and the rules of updating their personal information, such as address changes. There were also reports of missed SMS notifications about payment statuses, along with concerns over delayed or missing payments and confusion about the timing of these payments, particularly with the potential end of assistance looming in December 2024.

Additionally, refugees sought contact information for UNHCR offices and shared their experiences with the financial assistance program, discussing the conditions for receiving cash assistance.

Examples of comments translated into English:

"Are we expecting payments this month? Or have they been completely canceled? I fall under the eligible category, but I still haven't received anything."

"I haven't received any cash assistance. What documents are needed to apply for this program?"

"Could you please let me know where to reapply for UNHCR payments if I received a denial after the assessment interview?"

"Who went through the re-verification this month? Has anyone already received payments?"

VERIFICATION INTERVIEW 16%

In July, refugees raised concerns about the verification process, frequently mentioning inconsistencies in communication, in receiving updates after assessment interviews. Many reported missed SMS notifications regarding payments, unclear timelines for disbursement, and confusion about new eligibility criteria, often leading them to call hotlines for updates with little success.

The effectiveness and timing of mobile verification visits were also questioned, as some refugees experienced long waits and poor communication about scheduled visits. Additionally, there were calls for clearer contact information for UNHCR offices, highlighting the need for improved communication.

In August, a part of refugees expressed concerns about the re-verification process, particularly the need to be present in Chișinău at the enrollment center, according to the information provided in the SMS they received, regardless of their registration location, missed SMS invitations, and the consequences of not attending verifications, even if they were registered at other centers.

Uncertainty increased about attending verifications after extended absences and their potential impact on future program participation. Additionally, discussions focused on delays in payments following verifications and concerns about eligibility criteria, with some refugees having a perception that aid was unfairly granted to those in more stable financial situations while others were denied. Misunderstandings grew over the lack or late responses to appeals for reconsideration of payment decisions, with many reporting no updates or unclear feedback from UNHCR. Concerns were also raised about the randomness of payment approvals, required documents for verification, compliance with UNHCR conditions, and re-registering after missing verification for valid reasons.

Emotional responses to the verification process and payment distribution were evident, with refugees sharing personal stories about their hardships and the stress caused by uncertainty in receiving financial support, especially among families with children.
In September, refugees faced numerous challenges during the verification process. They expressed confusion regarding the frequency of verifications, often held monthly or every three months, and highlighted issues with notification systems, such as missed SMS alerts and unclear scheduling details for the verification interviews.

Delays in payments following verifications raised questions about the amounts and timelines, with many struggling to understand the eligibility criteria for receiving payments, particularly those under temporary protection.

Concerns also emerged about the required documentation, including the need for additional health certificates, ID numbers, and the presence of all family members at verifications. Unclear instructions and discrepancies in information sources contributed to further confusion. Personal experiences shared by participants underscored the emotional stress and logistical difficulties they encountered, especially when children were involved.

Examples of comments translated into English:

"We received a message,went for the interview, but we didn't get any confirmation on whether we passed or not the verification. I think I'll go check tomorrow at the enrollment center."

"- Who is waiting for mobile group visits? Has anyone received payment in between?
- Today, a mobile group came to my mom, but she hasn't checked her card yet.
-I've been waiting for them since June 6th."

"As long as we all haven't completed the verification, no one will receive any payments."

"I was at the verification yesterday, and since I didn't take my five-year-old daughter with me, they denied her participation. I'll have to take her starting Monday."

"If it weren't for this group, we wouldn't know that verifications were starting again. Half of the SMS messages didn't arrive, resulting in a loss of payments without any calls."

"There will be checks every couple of months to verify our residence."

"Could you please tell me what documents I need to bring for the verification?"

UNHCR CASH ASSISTANCE HELPLINE (CASH HOTLINE) 13%

Throughout the reporting period, refugees faced challenges with the UNHCR helpline, often struggling to reach the service due to dropped calls and long wait times. Misunderstandings arose as many reported receiving inconsistent or, as they perceived, inaccurate responses from helpline operators, which led to growing distrust in the system.

Concerns regarding pending payments were widespread, with refugees uncertain about the status of August disbursements while still receiving payments from July. This confusion was exacerbated by mixed messages and issues with SMS notifications, coupled with the helpline's lack of up-to-date information. Anxiety over potential re-verification also emerged, with refugees sharing their confusing experiences. Despite these misunderstandings, many expressed hope for improvements in communication, payment processing, and the performance of helpline operators.

Examples of comments translated into English:

"This hotline didn't even know that people were receiving money until they were told, and they kept insisting how it was possible if those payments weren't even in preparation."

"Has anyone been able to get through to the hotline today? Who went through verification in July and still hasn't received a response? What are they saying? I can't get through!"

"They have had the same response for three months now."

"They always say to wait."

"Don't listen to this hotline, just check your cards and that's all."

ACTIONS TAKEN BY INFO UNIT

- responded to questions regarding the UNHCR Cash assistance program in the Facebook group "Ajutor Ucraineni in Moldova" and telegram channel Українці Молдова/Помощь Украинцам в Молдове;
- suggested contacting the UNHCR Cash Assistance Hotline at 0 800 10823 and checking the Frequently Asked Questions section for more information on cash assistance;
- reminded about changes in the UNHCR cash assistance program, provided information;

- on September 5th held a live broadcast with a representative from UNHCR on the reconsideration of eligibility for participation in the UNHCR financial assistance program.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Offer timely updates to reduce confusion and anxiety among refugees;
- Provide clear information about selection criteria, registration procedures, and payment timelines, to foster trust and help refugees better understand their rights and responsibilities;
- Promote peer support and feedback mechanisms. Held regular feedback sessions for valuable insights and help address the unique challenges refugees face;
- Provide effective training for hotline operators and mobile teams to ensure accurate, consistent information, improving the experience for refugees seeking help.

OTHER CASH ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS FOR REFUGEES IN MOLDOVA 6 %

CASH ASSISTANCE PROGRAM IN THE TRANSNISTRIAN REGION

In July, discussions among refugees focused on financial assistance issues, particularly delays in payments for May and June, and the lack of notifications regarding payment disruptions. Concerns about registration status and hotline accessibility persisted, alongside the emphasized need for re-registration process without prior notice.

Refugees expressed uncertainty about the results of the screening process (verification)[5] and awaited notifications regarding cash assistance. They compared financial support in the Transnistrian region with UNHCR's program, highlighting financial difficulties they face, particularly among pensioners. There were also inquiries about the functioning of mobile teams and the quality and timing of information provided by IOM/ADRA representatives, indicating a strong demand for improved communication and informational support.

In August, discussions centered around delays and the absence of payments from IOM/ADRA, with many refugees awaiting notifications regarding their financial assistance status. There were ongoing concerns about the approval or denial of cash assistance applications. Refugees expressed misunderstandings over poor or even lack of information regarding registration and screening (verification) process, as well as difficulties accessing hotline support and delays in responses to assistance requests.

Moreover, questions arose regarding the eligibility criteria for cash assistance and the necessity of vulnerability screening (verification). Discussions also focused on the distribution procedures for assistance, along with the need for re-registration and the implications of denials. Additionally, refugees inquired about banks for receiving transfers, such as MoneyGram, and shared their experiences with IOM/ADRA representatives, emphasizing the need for support for older people and individuals with disabilities.

[5] In June, IOM Moldova announced changes to the multi-purpose cash assistance program in the Transnistrian region, specifically mentioning the initiation of vulnerability assessment criteria since May 27th.

In September, discussions centered on delays and uncertainty regarding future payments from IOM/ADRA, with many refugees inquiring about the status of their payments and sharing information about who had received assistance. There were also questions about the working hours and presence of IOM/ADRA offices in various cities.

Refugees also expressed interest in how to register for assistance and showed curiosity about groups and chats related to aid from IOM/ADRA.

Examples of comments translated into English:

"- Could you tell me, did IOM also conduct interviews in June, after which there were refusals, like in the UNHCR?
- Yes, the interviews were conducted, but the results are still unknown."

"Has everyone received cash assistance from IOM? I personally have not. I didn't even receive an SMS. I've been calling and writing to the hotline, but no one has been answering since this morning."

CASH ASSISTANCE FOR HOST FAMILIES

In July, discussions were mainly about delays in payments for the 14th round, leading to confusion about their status and reasons for the delays. Beneficiaries faced difficulties in reaching hotlines for support, and many pointed out unresponsiveness on messaging platforms, like Viber. There was also a significant interest in guidance on registering for assistance and understanding the implications of denials for host families. Conversations also included updates on the start of the 14th and future rounds of assistance. Additionally, questions arose regarding the financial assistance criteria and the role of mobile teams in distributing assistance, as many host families were contacted by phone about the refugee statuses.

In August, there were questions regarding payments delays, and questions about why Moldovan citizens hosting Ukrainian refugees in the Transnistrian region were unable to receive this assistance. Many host families were uncertain about payment timing and sought clarity on the registration process and eligibility criteria for assistance. Discussions included diverse opinions on the definition of a host family and the appropriateness of registering family members as hosts. Communication challenges were also prevalent, with difficulties in contacting the hotline and understanding the roles of various organizations involved in financial assistance.

In September, there were ongoing concerns about delays in payments for host families, with many being confused about the lack of SMS notifications and the process for withdrawing payments. Host families were also unclear about the necessity for transaction codes and whether missed calls from the WFP could affect their payment eligibility. Refugees discussed the necessity of regular monthly updates to ensure continued payments for host families, with frequent questions about necessary documents when changing addresses or updating details. Communication issues also persisted, with complaints about reaching the hotlines and navigating payment problems. Some families questioned how their host status impacted other assistance, such as winter compensation for households with registered individuals with disabilities.

Examples of comments translated into English:

"Has anyone already been contacted or called about the 'mobile group' checking up on them? I've read so much about the mobile group... Can someone explain what it is?"

"When will Ukrainian refugees in Transnistria, especially host families, receive assistance? This is complete injustice – those in Moldova are given aid, while those in Transnistria are not. We are the same refugees here, but we are being ignored."

"Does anyone know if my host family will still receive winter compensations because a person with a disability is registered in the house, or will they be canceled due to receiving payments as a host family? Are these different types of payments?"

"Does anyone know if it's mandatory for refugees registered with a host family to register with the Primaria?"

OTHER CASH ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS
(Action Against Hunger, Caritas, World Vision, Acted, People in Need, CRS)

Concerns were raised about discrepancies in cash payments approvals, leading to confusion over why some refugees received multiple cash assistance while others received none. There were ongoing discussions regarding the eligibility criteria and selection processes for different financial assistance programs, alongside questions about the registration process and the need for proper documentation. Refugees sought clarification on whether previous registrations were sufficient for continued support.

Inquiries about the availability of assistance programs highlighted concerns over communication and information sharing among organizations. There were reports of suspicious calls about financial assistance, which led to requests for caution and advice on how to check if they are legitimate. Additionally, experiences with rental compensation raised questions about whether rental properties would be checked for tax compliance. Misunderstandings also persisted regarding difficulties in contacting different hotlines and obtaining timely information.

Examples of comments translated into English:

"Why did some people receive approval for rent compensation from all three organizations while others received nothing?"

"We express our sincere gratitude to the organization ACTED for their assistance in paying the rent. Thank you very much; you have helped us greatly."

"A week ago, I received a call supposedly from the organization People in Need, claiming they provide assistance for school children. They asked me to provide my temporary protection code, which I did. The caller said I would receive a callback in an hour, but it's now been a week, and no one has contacted me. I'm starting to wonder if I fell victim to scammers. There seems to be an increase in fraudulent activities, with reports that scammers are collecting personal information under the guise of assistance, making me anxious about the possibility of having shared my details with them."

"Could someone please tell me if anyone participated in the rental compensation program and utility assistance from Caritas? I have a question: will the landlord's tax payments be checked, and will they be verified through tax records? The person is concerned and afraid to sign any documents provided by the organization, which require both the landlord and the tenant to fill them out."

"Do you know if those who registered and received assistance last winter from World Vision, need to register again this winter, or will their information be automatically used from last time?"

ACTIONS TAKEN BY INFO UNIT

- responded to questions regarding other Cash assistance programs, from available information, in the Facebook group "Ajutor Ucraineni in Moldova" and telegram channel Українці Молдова/Помощь Украинцам в Молдове;
- redirected refugees with inquiries about programs to the IOM Moldova hotline and telegram channel;
- redirected refugees with inquiries about programs to the WFP hotline;
- shared information and promoted registration for participation in the program "Grants for housing rental and utilities" from CRS and Caritas Moldova;
- shared feedback with World Food Programme (WFP) on "Cash for host program";
- shared feedback with IOM Moldova on "Cash assistance program";
- shared information and promoted registration for the World Vision's "Cash assistance for the winter period " program.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Establish clear communication protocols to ensure beneficiaries receive timely and consistent updates;
- Simplify the registration and re-registration processes by providing clear guidelines on required documentation;
- Improve hotlines accessibility;
- Improve staff training for more effective support;
- Focus on delivering targeted support for vulnerable groups;
- Establish channels for ongoing feedback;
- Collaboration among organizations to streamline processes and improve the sharing of best practices.

FEEDBACK ANALYSIS: LEGAL STATUS 31%

INFORMATION MONITORED ON SOCIAL MEDIA ABOUT LEGAL ISSUES INCLUDES QUESTIONS ABOUT:

- Vehicles with Ukrainian Registration in Moldova: Duration of stay for vehicles, fines for exceeding 180 days, necessity of vinieta[6], cost, regulations for vehicles under temporary protection, necessity of technical inspection, rules for temporarily imported vehicles. How to re-register a car from Ukrainian to Moldovan registration, required documents.
- Obtaining Driving Licenses: Procedures, necessary documents, conditions for people with temporary protection, possibility of converting Ukrainian licenses. Challenges of obtaining a driving license in Moldova - driving schools allow students to study but require a residence permit for taking the exams.
- Opening Bank Accounts: Conditions and documents for opening bank accounts for Ukrainian citizens in Moldova, specific requirements for sailors and other document-related restrictions. The necessity of temporary protection, the possibility of establishing foreign currency accounts, and the documentation needed for different banks. Experiences with unsuccessful account openings, service issues, and dissatisfaction with the conditions provided by banks.
- Duration of stay in Moldova: Restrictions on stay for Ukrainians who do not have temporary protection and the conditions under which one can stay in the country for more than 90 or 180 days.
- Other legal and Bureaucratic Procedures: Registration of SRLs[7], access to social support, documentation requirements.
- Social services and Benefits: Obtaining social benefits, including child allowances, and the requirements for receiving them. Questions about how to apply for a pension if you are in Moldova with TP. Accessing healthcare services, giving birth in Moldova.
- Documents for Crossing the Border: Necessary documents for crossing the border.
- Buying and Registering Property: Procedures for purchasing housing in Moldova and in the Transnistrian region, required documentation, and legal processes.
- Legal assistance: Interest in organizations providing free legal assistance and how to obtain advice on legal issues. Questions about where to find a lawyer who is familiar with the migration legislation of Moldova.
- Marriage and Legal procedures: Questions about how Ukrainian citizens can register a marriage in Moldova, the necessary documents and process.

[6] The tax for using the roads on the territory of the Republic of Moldova for each vehicle not registered in the Republic of Moldova.

[7] "Societate cu Răspundere Limitată" - "Limited Liability Company" (LLC) in English. This type of business entity is one of the most common forms for small and medium-sized enterprises in Moldova.

During the reporting period discussions on Temporary protection status covered several themes. Mainly questions were about application procedures: the documentation needed to apply for temporary protection, renewal, and closure processes when changing countries. Locations in Chișinău for applications and the necessity of online submissions.
There were also many questions about required documents like proof of residence or rental agreements.

Travel regulations were discussed, regarding returning to Ukraine under temporary protection, as well as clarifications on the status of temporary protection upon leaving Moldova.
Requests for resources, including application websites and official office addresses in Chișinău, were common.
The necessity of in-person actions for closing or renouncing temporary protection was discussed, along with whether formal closure was required when moving to another country.

In the category of citizenship of the Republic of Moldova, refugees explored obtaining Moldovan citizenship through descent, especially for those with ancestors, with significant focus on required documents and varying processing times. Concerns were also raised about the Romanian language exam, particularly regarding exemptions and future legislative changes. Some refugees faced frequent delays in the application process, and there was confusion over the need for an apostille and translation of documents. Marriage-based citizenship inquiries centered on eligibility, residence requirements, and required documents. Refugees also discussed seeking legal assistance and preparing for potential history and law exams.

In discussions about residency in Moldova, refugees inquired about the process of applying for a residence permit in Moldova, focusing on eligibility criteria, required documents, and whether purchasing property, working officially, or having a child in Moldova would qualify them. Concerns were raised about the length and complexity of the procedure. Numerous requests were made for legal assistance in navigating the application process, particularly for consultations and document handling. Additionally, discussions frequently touched on specific requirements like income levels and medical insurance. There were also inquiries about permanent residence and its differences from temporary residence.

Examples of comments translated into English:

"Could you please tell me if temporary protection is required to open an account for seafarers in Moldova? And why have I heard that many banks refuse to open accounts for us?"

"How long can a car stay in Moldova?"

"I found myself in a situation where I received temporary protection in Moldova, and now I am in Romania. I need to cancel the temporary protection; can you advise me on how to do that?"

"Who has applied for temporary protection? Were you asked for the rental agreement for housing?"

"What website should I apply for temporary protection on, please let me know, and what documents should I take with me?"

"Has anyone dealt with the process of obtaining Moldovan citizenship? What documents did you submit?"

"If I work officially, can I get a residence permit?"

ACTIONS TAKEN BY INFO UNIT

- responded to questions related to legal status, including TP and shared informative posts;
- shared partners informative posts, video, leaflets regarding temporary protection status and other legal matters;
- directed questions to the Green Line at 080080011, the Hotline of the General Inspectorate for Migration - at 080001527, the Legal Center of Lawyers (CDA) at +37360574848, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) at 080010877, Acted Moldova +37368352054, provided links to dopomoga.gov.md;
- provided guidelines for Non-Residents buying property in Moldova;
- shared official instructions for opening a bank account at MAIB;

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommend to seek assistance from qualified legal professionals when dealing with legal matters;
- Continue to inform refugees about their rights and obligations under temporary protection;
- Conduct informative sessions on relevant topics.

FEEDBACK ANALYSIS: BORDER AND ADMINISTRATIVE LINE CROSSING 7%

BORDER CROSSING

Refugees in Moldova faced various inquiries regarding border crossing requirements, including questions about the necessity of passports, whether internal or international ones were needed, and how temporary protection status affected their ability to exit the country. There were also requests for clarity on parental consent for minors traveling alone, including the need for notarized consent when accompanied by a grandparent, for example. There were some unclarities about the necessity of valid Technical inspection crossing the border. Additionally, there were specific questions regarding pet travel, including required vaccination certificates and health documentation, and discussions revealed inconsistencies in the enforcement of these regulations at different border crossing points in Moldova. Legal issues arose around the complexities of temporary protection rights, with refugees encountering unexpected document requests at border controls and queries about the legality of exporting vehicles registered to someone else (when exiting Moldova by car).

Refugees highlighted their travel experiences, detailing delays and challenges faced at various points of entry, such as Palanca.

Lastly, discussions centered on the necessity of medical insurance for entry into Moldova and what medical documents were required for crossing the border.

Examples of comments translated into English:

"Could you please tell me if it is necessary to have a foreign passport to enter Moldova?"

"Will a 17-year-old boy be allowed to pass without the accompaniment of parents?"

"Who knows which border crossing points allow animals at the Moldova-Ukraine border? And what documents are needed for the animal?"

"Could you let me know if anything has changed? Do we only need documents for the car, a green card, and a vignette? And are they asking for medical insurance? I read in a group that people were not allowed through at Palanca without medical insurance."

"Could someone let me know? There was information earlier that whoever entered the country by car must also exit by the same vehicle. Does this still apply now, and how do they check this?"

ADMINISTRATIVE LINE CROSSING TO/FROM THE TRANSNISTRIAN REGION

Discussions frequently focused on whether Ukrainian men and older individuals (60+) could enter the Transnistrian region, with concerns about needing approval/invitations for family visits, noting that the process can be complex and time-consuming. Refugees reported mixed experiences with customs checks, where restrictions varied based on travel history.

For vehicle travel, refugees asked if the same person must drive the car in and out of the Transnistrian region, and what documents were required.

Examples of comments translated into English:

"Could you please tell me if a 60-year-old man needs to get an entry permit? At 59, it was required. I'm not sure about 60."

"Could you please tell me how long it takes to get approval if an invitation is made for someone from Ukraine to enter?"

"Is it possible to travel to Transnistria with a Ukrainian license plate?"

ACTIONS TAKEN BY INFO UNIT

- ➜ advised to contact the Border Police Hotline of the Republic of Moldova at +373 22 259 717, the Green Line for assistance to Ukrainian citizens in Moldova at 0 800 800 11, or the Customs Service of the Republic of Moldova at +37322788888;
- ➜ reminded rules for border crossing, including requirements for pets;
- ➜ informed about measures to restrict access to the Chisinau International Airport terminal;

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ➜ Continue to provide information and facilitate easy access to border-crossing regulations.

FEEDBACK ANALYSIS: EDUCATION 5%

In July, discussions were about the application process for Ukrainian students seeking admission to universities and colleges in Moldova. They focused on the necessary documents, entrance requirements, scholarship opportunities, and language options available for refugees. Additionally, there were frequent inquiries regarding school enrollment for children, particularly about remaining online in Ukrainian schools while attending Moldovan institutions and the availability of instruction in Russian or Ukrainian. Parents expressed concerns about finding kindergartens that accept Ukrainian children, alongside worries about high private kindergarten costs. There was strong interest in Romanian language courses and tutors, as well as legal and translation services for educational documents. Discussions also highlighted the medical requirements for school admission.

In August, discussions focused on challenges faced by Ukrainian children in Moldova. Many inquired about schools offering instruction in Ukrainian or Russian, focusing on the enrollment process and the requirement for original documents from Ukrainian schools.

Additionally, many inquiries were made about colleges and universities, particularly regarding admission benefits for Ukrainians and the overall quality of education.

Parents sought information about kindergartens in Chisinau that offer Ukrainian and Russian language groups, focusing on both private and public options.

Inquiries about free and affordable Romanian language courses for adults and children were common, along with requests for private tutors who could teach Romanian from the ground up.

In September, discussions highlighted numerous inquiries about kindergartens with Ukrainian or Russian language groups, particularly in areas like Ciocana and Riscani in Chisinau. Parents sought information on quality and the availability of speech therapy groups. There was also interest in Ukrainian schools, focusing on the teaching of the Ukrainian language and the procedures for transferring children from Ukrainian to Moldovan schools, including necessary enrollment documents and adaptation processes.

Many refugees inquired about both paid and free Romanian language courses for adults and children, especially in Chisinau. There was high demand for tutors and free educational resources, along with questions about discounts for Ukrainian students and government support for refugees.

Examples of comments translated into English:

"For those whose children are applying to universities in Moldova, there are a couple of questions. What documents need to be gathered? Are there any benefits for Ukrainians?"

"Where can I find free courses for Ukrainians on various topics like manicure, makeup, and English? I remember reading about them, but I didn't save the information, thinking I wouldn't need it."

"Are there any Ukrainian classes for children in Chișinău? Can a child be transferred, or would they need to attend both schools simultaneously?"

ACTIONS TAKEN BY INFO UNIT

- provided, upon request, the list of general education institutions for the enrollment of children from refugee families from Ukraine;
- informed that Ukrainian children can enroll in Moldovan schools at any time during the year, regardless of whether the child or their parents/guardians have temporary protection status;
- shared information about educational opportunities, cultural and linguistic support and language courses, youth and adults programs;
- reminded the child helpline 116 111 is free, anonymous, and confidential;
- shared The Ministry of Education and Research of the Republic of Moldova information that graduates of lyceums and colleges can pursue licentiate or master's programs at 16 universities across the country;
- shared CCR announcement about financial support available to refugee students studying at universities in Moldova;
- informed about additional session for admission to the eadmitere.gov.md platform to higher educational institutions of the country.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Provide information about available courses, vocational training opportunities, and learning platforms, to enhance refugees' personal and professional skills;
- Increase awareness and accessibility of free language programs for refugees;
- Enhance access to education and learning opportunities.

FEEDBACK ANALYSIS: FOOD/NON-FOOD ITEMS 5%

During the reporting period, the main topic of discussion was voucher distribution programs, particularly the deadlines for registration and eligibility criteria for different organizations. However, issues also emerged with the registration process, sometimes the registration forms closed too quickly, and some food vouchers were occasionally not accepted in stores because of overdue dates mentioned on them.

Discussions about humanitarian aid centered on the distribution of food packages, hygiene products like diapers and cleaning supplies, and the assistance offered by various organizations. Refugees shared details on how to register, the types of aid available, and which organizations provided support.
Some concerns were raised about the contents of food boxes, the distribution of clothing and school supplies. Eligibility criteria, including age and documentation requirements, added further challenges to accessing assistance.

Many refugees felt there was an unfair distribution of aid between families with one child and those with multiple children.
There were many questions regarding assistance for children under three years old.
Older refugees shared that many encountered challenges in obtaining assistance meant for seniors, and some reported that such aid was no longer available. Pensioners and individuals with disabilities also experienced delays in receiving support, including postponed voucher distributions.

Refugees coordinated transportation to aid centers in Chisinau, Tiraspol, and other areas. They primarily discussed the locations of centers like Moldova-Film and St. Anna in Chisinau, with many inquiring about addresses and operating procedures.
Among refugees there was an opinion that organizations like the Red Cross in the transnistrian region and The Salvation Army faced some communication issues, leading to delays in aid delivery.

Examples of comments translated into English:

"Could you please tell me if any assistance is still being provided in Bender?"

"I tried to register to receive a voucher. Regarding the question 'Those who meet the specified criteria will be called...'—when can I expect a call, how long does it take to process the application? Should I even wait for a response?"

"If I am receiving cash assistance from IOM/ADRA, can I register for these vouchers?"

"Please tell me, I received assistance at Moldova Film for the first time. Do I need to register with them every time, or do they inform me when I can come back? Or is this a one-time aid?"

"Please let me know where in the city of Rezina, Moldova, refugees can receive assistance."

"I recently registered for hygiene assistance with World Vision and received an SMS confirming it, but no address was provided. Does anyone know where to collect the hygiene supplies? We've only received financial aid from them before, so this is new for us."

"Can you please let me know what assistance is being provided by Katalyst Kitchens this week?"

"Are vouchers only distributed in Chișinău, and not in Tiraspol?"

ACTIONS TAKEN BY INFO UNIT

- provided upon request the list of charitable centers, churches, and other organizations offering non-financial assistance to Ukrainian citizens in Moldova;
- recommended contacting the Green Line at 0 800 800 11 and reaching out to local municipalities with any inquiries;
- shared information about vouchers, medication, food, and clothes/footwear, school supplies distribution for refugees, including the Transnistrian region;
- informed about organizations that offer assistance with clothing and footwear;
- informed about the operating hours, regulations, closures, or address changes of different humanitarian organizations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ➜ Establish clearer communication between aid organizations and refugees by providing regular updates on registration deadlines, eligibility criteria, and available assistance;
- ➜ Develop programs to assist vulnerable populations, such as elderly refugees and those with disabilities;
- ➜ Ensure that voucher programs are accessible and user-friendly;
- ➜ Clarify and simplify the criteria and registration processes for accessing assistance;
- ➜ Enhance aid distribution efforts in regions beyond Chisinau to ensure equitable access to assistance throughout Moldova;
- ➜ Solicit feedback from refugees regarding the provided aid to ensure that assistance meets their actual needs.

FEEDBACK ANALYSIS: HOUSING 3%

During the reporting period, discussions highlighted various concerns regarding housing for refugees in Moldova, where inquiries were made about the availability of RAC's (refugee accommodation centers) and temporary housing, especially for families with children.

Discussions revealed that many refugees faced challenges finding affordable housing in Chișinău, where rental prices were rising, making it difficult for many to afford rent. Economic issues were significant, with high living costs compared to salaries leading to difficulties in managing rent payments and unemployment.

There were also inquiries and help requests about financial assistance programs for housing and financial support.

Personal stories reflected mixed sentiments from some locals towards refugees and renting houses to them, and also emphasizing challenges with living conditions and basic services in refugee accommodation centers.

Overall, refugees highlighted that there is an urgent need for structured support systems to address these issues.

Examples of comments translated into English:

"Could you please let me know if anyone has the contact number for volunteers in Chișinău who assist with the accommodation of refugees?"

"The heating season and the prices for heating are simply above all acceptable limits. I won't even mention the cost of rent."

"What about the assistance programs for housing? Is there still any accommodation available in refugee centers in Moldova?"

"Currently, refugees are facing difficulties in Moldova. There are few centers for accommodation, rental prices are high, humanitarian aid is distributed infrequently and not to everyone. Utilities are expensive."

"Please let me know if there is any housing program available right now. If there is, please provide a phone number. There is nothing available! The accommodation centers have also closed."

ACTIONS TAKEN BY INFO UNIT

- provided links to commonly used websites and groups featuring housing listings;
- recommended contacting the Green Line for assistance to Ukrainian citizens in Moldova at 0 800 800 11 for free accommodation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop initiatives and promote collaboration between stakeholders to provide affordable housing options for refugees;
- Strengthen Financial Assistance Programs;
- Assess and improve living conditions in RACs.

FEEDBACK ANALYSIS: SECURITY 2%

During the reporting period, discussions and significant concerns emerged regarding the safety of living in Moldova and treatment of Ukrainian refugees in Moldova. Mixed sentiments among locals were noted, with some viewing Ukrainians as burdens on resources. Some refugees shared personal negative interactions with locals.
Loud sounds, such as explosions and fireworks, raised concerns and instilled fear among refugees.

Concerns about the potential deportation of Ukrainian men of conscription age to Ukraine intensified fears of police actions. This led to questions about police interactions and the legal protections available for Ukrainians in Moldova, compounded by the dissemination of unverified information regarding safety and legal matters affecting them.
Additionally, the announcements of military exercises, along with rumors concerning the implications of military presence in Moldova, generated public anxiety and confusion.

Examples of comments translated into English:

"If a Ukrainian gets caught by the police for an offense, they could be sent back to Ukraine."

"Does anyone know what that loud explosion with a flash was in Buiucani?"

"Could you please tell me, drivers, how it is at the bus station? Are they catching Ukrainian guys there?"

*"There have been rumors for a long time that it's unsafe for Ukrainians (men) to be in Moldova. They could be asked for documents, and based on that, a Ukrainian could be taken away in an unclear direction. I want to ask the audience and administrators of this group: Has anyone encountered a similar situation, and what is the proper course of action in this matter?
As far as I understand, there can be no legality in the actions of the authorities."*

"I also read today that Moldova decided to deport men to Ukraine in the Pridnestrovie chat."

ACTIONS TAKEN BY INFO UNIT

- suggested to trust and consult official sources of information;

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Combat misinformation and provide accurate updates on legal issues and community safety, easing tensions and fears;
- Authorities should actively communicate with both the local population and Ukrainian refugees to clarify information;
- Encourage interaction between locals and Ukrainian refugees to enhance understanding and empathy;
- Law enforcement and local authorities should make sure that Ukrainian refugees are informed about their rights and protections under local laws.

FEEDBACK ANALYSIS: HEALTHCARE 2%

During the reporting period, many refugees faced challenges in accessing medical care in Moldova. Discussions and information sharing highlighted long wait times and bureaucratic hurdles encountered while registering with family doctors or clinics.

Concerns about inadequate assistance for refugees were common, alongside frustrations over high medical costs, even for those with temporary protection.

Many refugees stated that having a temporary protection status was insufficient for necessary medical services.

Discussions also emphasized the need for proper documentation to access healthcare and confusion about updating personal information after changing location.

Experiences with healthcare providers varied widely; while some praised the attentive medical services, others complained about the quality and attitude of family doctors. Many noted that private clinics offered more timely care compared to overwhelmed public facilities. But not everyone has the possibility to access paid medical care.

Additionally, individuals sought information on vaccination availability, particularly for COVID-19, demonstrating an ongoing interest in preventive health measures.

Concerns were also raised for vulnerable refugees, including the older refugees and those with chronic conditions, who struggled to find adequate medical support.

The refugee community emphasized the importance of better communication regarding available healthcare services and support systems for refugees in Moldova.

Examples of comments translated into English:

"I went to the clinic in Botanica, and they keep telling me that the TP policy isn't activated or is inactive, so they say I have to pay for tests, etc. Can anyone explain what's going on?"

"Can someone please advise? We submitted an application to sign a declaration with a family doctor, and we've been waiting for three months already. Is it the same for everyone? We can't make an appointment with the doctor because we haven't been added to their system yet."

"Could someone advise who to contact? We went to the family doctor to get a prescription for medications, but the doctor said that since we are not insured, we cannot receive prescriptions for discounted medications. However, three months ago, we were listed in the system as insured and received a prescription. I have temporary protection status."

"If you get sick, where can you go to see a doctor and get tests done? Preferably somewhere that accepts temporary protection status, but it seems like nothing is covered under protection status anymore."

"Could you please tell me what documents are required at the local clinic to register with a family doctor?"

ACTIONS TAKEN BY INFO UNIT

- suggested reaching out to the Green Line at 0 800 800 11, International Organization for Migration (IOM) at 0 800 108 77, the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Moldova + 373 22 721 010, INTERSOS, RCTV Memoria, Initiativa Pozitiva, ACTED;
- informed about INTERSOS Moldova primary medical care and mobile clinic services;
- shared information about awareness and information sessions;
- informed about psychological support for children and adults.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Encourage refugees to seek medical services through organizations like INTERSOS, RCTV Memoria, and hotlines such as the Green Line, IOM, and the Ministry of Health of Moldova;
- Provide accurate information about healthcare services;
- Conduct training for healthcare providers to improve attitudes towards patients;
- Ensure that refugees with temporary protection status can access necessary medical services;
- Ensure clear and consistent information and requirements across clinics.

FEEDBACK ANALYSIS: EMPLOYMENT 1%

During the reporting period, Ukrainian refugees in Moldova faced numerous employment challenges, primarily due to language barriers. Job opportunities were limited in cities like Chișinău and Bălți, affecting even qualified professionals, such as medical staff and IT workers.

For those interested in starting a business, the process of obtaining work patents was confusing, and self-employment came with a lot of questions.

Work-life balance was another issue, particularly for mothers, who often faced discrimination during job interviews due to childcare responsibilities.

Despite these challenges, refugees stated that available opportunities for vocational training and career development are a positive thing, as some sought to change professions or upgrade their skills.
Refugees highlighted that they actively used online platforms and personal connections to search for employment, but the challenges they faced often outweighed the opportunities available. Discrimination at the workplace, wage disparities, and different treatment were common themes of discussions, with refugees often receiving lower pay than locals for the same work.

Legal issues also emerged, as refugees had to navigate complex documentation requirements to work officially under temporary protection status.

Teenagers and students sought part-time or freelance work, particularly during the summer, while others looked for online employment options.

Examples of comments translated into English:

"Can you please let me know if there are any online work-from-home opportunities available (I'm a mom on maternity leave)?"

"Is there anyone among us who has officially opened their own business in Moldova, specifically regarding obtaining a patent?"

"Could you please recommend professional courses in Chișinău that offer job placement assistance afterward?"

"- Could you please let me know if it's possible to find a job in Moldova with only Russian and Ukrainian language skills? What is the average salary in Chișinău?
- From my experience, the salaries are very low, and they don't particularly want to hire Ukrainians."

"Could you please inform me about the rights of refugees with temporary protection when it comes to employment and working conditions in general? It seems that all I hear about are obligations. I would like to know if we have any rights or if we just have to accept our situation."

ACTIONS TAKEN BY INFO UNIT

- redirected questions to the Legal Center of Lawyers (CDA);
- shared information about job opportunities;
- shared information about Grant application for small businesses by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) for entrepreneurs in Chisinau and several districts;
- promoted platforms like angajat.md, rabota.md, Robota project for job searches;
- shared information about employment support for Ukrainian teachers - getting their diplomas recognized by the Ministry of Education in Moldova;
- shared information about professional courses and training.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Promote partnerships among NGOs, government, and local businesses to create an inclusive job market that actively employs refugees and provides essential support;
- Advocate for simplifying documentation and legal requirements for refugees seeking employment to enhance clarity and ease of navigation;
- Launch awareness campaigns to educate employers and the local workforce on the value of diversity and the importance of equitable treatment, promoting inclusive hiring practices;
- Develop targeted job placement services that connect refugees with employers;

ABOUT US

Laolaltă NGO is a non-governmental organization from the Republic of Moldov founded in 2020, which promotes the involvement of citizens in community mobilization, good cooperation with public authorities, and community development. Laolaltă is a member of the "Moldova for Peace (MpP)" civic Initiative, “Gender Equality Platform” and Erasmus+.

"Moldova for Peace" (MpP) is a civic initiative created to assist refugees from Ukraine. MpP brings together people who recognize and understand the difficulties faced by those who have left home and loved ones behind to reach safety. "Moldova for Peace" is a non-profit movement that operates under the legal umbrella of several NGOs of which Laolaltă NGO is a member.

- **Accountability to Affected People (AAP TF) member**

Laolaltă presents updated data on refugee and local community feedback monthly to the AAP Task Force working group and provides recommendations based on detailed and comparative analyses.

- **Refugee Coordination Forum member**

Laolaltă is an active member of the Refugee Coordination Forum. The InfoUnit participates in sector and several working groups.

- **Round table discussions**

Laolaltă participates in discussions on the refugee response in Moldova along with governmental entities, international and national NGOs, and UN agencies.

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