KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2024 & PROGRAMME SUMMARY FOR 2025

UNHCR Representation for Central Europe | Hungary

62,360 refugees from Ukraine were recorded in Hungary as of 31 January 2025

Core UNHCR assistance figures in 2024 (as of 31 Dec 2024)

8,100 refugees received protection information and services from UNHCR and partners

21,400 refugees were reached with non-food items

16,500 refugees received inclusion support

1,800 refugees received Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) services

Detailed operational data and the latest figures for Hungary can be viewed here.

Background & operational context

UNHCR has been present in Hungary since 1989, working closely with state institutions, municipal authorities, UN agencies, and national partners. Since the start of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, Hungary has maintained an open-door policy for refugees from Ukraine and proactively implemented the EU Temporary Protection Directive (TPD).

As of February 2025, 43,403 Ukrainian refugees have been granted temporary protection in Hungary, with an additional 19,000 residing in the country under other legal permit types.

While temporary protection provides access to residence, employment, education, health-care, financial aid, and family reunification, refugees continue to face significant challenges, including language barriers, limited income, difficulties in accessing services, and uncertainty about their long-term prospects.

Although many have made strides toward inclusion, complex socio-economic realities and shrinking humanitarian resources are straining available services. Donor funding and public solidarity are declining, creating growing gaps in sustained support, especially for the most vulnerable.

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KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2024

Protection

UNHCR and its partners—Hungarian Baptist Aid, Hungarian Helsinki Committee, Menedék, Cordelia Foundation, From Streets to Homes Association (ULE), Mandák House/Devai Inn, Hungarian Interchurch Aid, and Carpathian Foundation—continued to address the protection needs of refugees through targeted services and system-strengthening efforts:

- A total of 7,852 refugees received protection services, including legal assistance, protection case management, and support for persons with specific needs.
- 653 individuals received legal assistance, including support with documentation and access to rights and services.
- 398 children and caregivers accessed child protection services tailored to address the needs of at-risk children and promote their safety and well-being.
- 346 professionals were trained on child protection and children's rights.
- 678 individuals received specialized assistance in response to violence or exploitation, including case management, psychosocial support, legal aid, and safe accommodation.
- 158 border police officers, 207 migration officials, and 74 additional frontline staff were trained to identify and refer individuals with specific protection needs.
- 5,905 individuals participated in community-based psychosocial support activities aimed at strengthening resilience & emotional well-being.
- 6,794 individuals received information on services and refugee rights in a language they understand, improving access to protection and essential services.

Basic needs, health & well-being

UNHCR delivered timely and targeted support to meet refugees' basic needs and improve their well-being:

- 12,222 people received non-food items (NFIs), including hygiene kits and other essential household supplies.
- 644 individuals benefited from targeted mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services.
- 67 refugees with severe disabilities received monthly cash assistance for nine months. Monitoring showed improved living conditions for 73% and reduced stress for 96%. In response to new limits on access to subsidized shelters, 221 families (727 individuals) received winter cash assistance tailored to their needs.

Socio-economic inclusion

UNHCR's socio-economic programming supported self-reliance and access to services:

- The Budapest Helps! Community Centre, run with IOM, served 17,313 refugees, offering legal counselling, language classes, and psychosocial support.
- 9,398 counselling sessions were delivered on integration-related issues such as housing, employment, health, and education.
- A UNHCR job fair connected over 200 refugees with 19 employers, with more than 100 participants registering for jobs or job databases.
- UNHCR intensified advocacy for the inclusion of Temporary Protection (TP) beneficiaries in national social protection systems, focusing on disability, child protection, and social care.

Advocacy and public engagement

UNHCR maintained strong coordination with authorities and partners while promoting refugee rights and positive narratives:

- UNHCR regularly engaged with the Ministry of Interior, National Directorate for Aliens' Policing (NDGAP), the Government Commissioner for Refugees, and the Municipality of Budapest.
- UNHCR's advocacy contributed to a government decree promulgated in February 2024, which recognized caregivers of persons with disabilities as a vulnerable group eligible for subsidized accommodation. This marked an important step toward improving access to housing support for families with significant care responsibilities.
- The Refugee Coordination Forum (RCF) and sectoral working groups remained key platforms for information sharing, joint planning, advocacy, and coordinated implementation of the refugee response.
- Public engagement activities, including collaborations with the EU Delegation, Sziget Festival, Verzio Film Festival, and Budapest Pride, created spaces for refugees to share their stories and challenge negative narratives. A total of 356 community awareness and sensitization campaigns, workshops, and public events were organized, fostering mutual understanding and inclusion between refugees and host communities, as well as within the host community itself.

Indicator	# (2024)
# of people who received cash assistance (refugees with severe disabilities and recipients of winter cash assistance)	**1,360**
# of people who received shelter and housing assistance	**662**
# of people who received non-food items	**12,222**
# of people who received protection services	**7,852**
# of people who received legal assistance	**653**
# of children and caregivers who received child protection services	**398**
# of individuals who participated in community-based psychosocial support activities	**5,905**
# of people who benefitted from livelihoods and socio-economic inclusion interventions	**5,565**
# of people who benefitted from mental health and psychosocial support services	**644**

PROGRAMME SUMMARY FOR 2025

Overview of needs

As displacement from Ukraine continues into its third year, the refugee response in Hungary has shifted from emergency assistance to addressing long-term needs and identifying sustainable solutions. Women and children make up the majority of the refugee population under Temporary Protection (TP), with 61% of refugee households led by women and 40% by single mothers. Many households face overlapping vulnerabilities: nearly half include individuals with chronic illnesses, one in four include older persons (60+), and one in ten include a person with a disability.

Access to national social protection systems remains limited for TP holders, affecting their ability to achieve sustainable inclusion, particularly for children at risk, persons with disabilities, and older persons. Refugee children—comprising one-third of the population—face challenges enrolling in local schools due to language barriers, bullying, and the burden of balancing Ukrainian and Hungarian education systems.

Economic integration remains difficult. Many refugees work in low-paid, insecure jobs, while unemployment disproportionately affects women and caregivers. Financial hardship is widespread, with one-third of refugee families at risk of poverty. Rising rental costs and limited affordable housing pose a barrier to self-reliance, particularly for Roma refugees and persons with specific needs.

Health-related challenges remain a concern. Refugees with chronic conditions, disabilities, or caregiving duties often face difficulty accessing subsidized medical care due to language barriers, long wait times, and bureaucratic limitations. Access to mental health services is further constrained by stigma and lack of culturally appropriate care.

As many of these individuals are unable to work, they rely heavily on remittances, limited social benefits, and humanitarian assistance to cover medical costs.

Despite overall positive interactions with host communities, many refugees report limited social connections and feelings of isolation. Strengthening inclusion and trust-building efforts—particularly for youth, older refugees, and marginalized groups—remains critical to fostering long-term cohesion and ensuring equitable access to rights and opportunities.

Strategic priorities for 2025

Protection: Enhance legal and protection assistance, with a focus on persons with specific needs, GBV survivors, and children at risk. Expand protection monitoring, case management, and community-based protection approaches.

Inclusion & self-reliance: Promote socio-economic inclusion through access to employment services, language classes, and private sector engagement.

Basic needs & housing stability: Provide targeted cash assistance and in-kind support for vulnerable refugees to meet essential needs and support transition to private accommodation.

Access to education: Facilitate inclusion of refugee children in national education systems, including language support and catch-up classes.

Social cohesion: Support community-based programming that fosters peaceful co-existence and inclusion.

UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

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