

Poland

19 September 2022

There are nearly **1.4 million refugees** from Ukraine recorded in Poland, the **majority are women and children as well as older people and people with disabilities**.

UNHCR is supporting government-led efforts through a multisectoral response focusing on **ensuring access to asylum and protection, assisting the most vulnerable refugees, and facilitating inclusion**.

UNHCR and partners are at **border points and in refugee-hosting areas** to provide information on rights and services, to identify and support vulnerable refugees, to reinforce reception capacities and support longer-term solutions.

KEY FIGURES

Nearly 1.4 million refugees from Ukraine recorded in Poland.

6 Blue Dots and **5** inclusive community centers providing protection services

7 cash enrolment centres currently opened across Poland

279,572 refugees received cash assistance

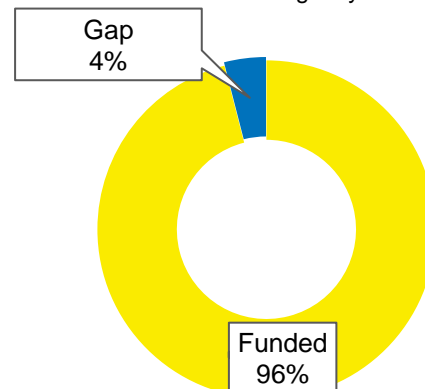
343 trucks with emergency supplies sent to support internally displaced people in Ukraine

82 truckloads with core relief items were provided to several municipalities across Poland for supporting refugees, including at reception and accommodation centres

FUNDING (AS OF 13 SEPTEMBER 2022)

US\$ 211.2 M

requested for the Ukraine Emergency Situation for Poland



STAFFING & OFFICES

110 international and national staff

4 offices in Warsaw, Krakow, Rzeszow and Lublin and mobile teams at border crossing points

Overview

Since the military offensive in Ukraine, Poland transformed within a few weeks from a country hosting relatively few refugees into one of the main refugee-hosting countries in the world.

Refugee arrivals are expected to continue as the situation remains uncertain in Ukraine, with large displacement and destruction as well as upcoming harsh winter conditions. While some refugees have moved on in Europe and elsewhere, the main receiving European country remains Poland.

UNHCR has boosted its presence and response to provide life-saving cash assistance, protection, and other support in line with Government-led efforts.



UNHCR Representative meets with staff from Volunteer Centre in Lublin, in a house hosting four families who fled Ukraine. Local organizations are frontline responders. © UNHCR/ Gouyou Beauchamps, August 2022

Main Activities

In close collaboration with government and local authorities, UN Agencies, partners, and civil society organizations, UNHCR undertakes the following activities:



Protection (including in Blue Dots and community centres)

UNHCR supports government and local authorities so that refugees have access to accurate information on available services. **Blue Dots are support hubs that bring together critical protection services and information** for refugees fleeing the war in Ukraine, with a particular focus on helping those at greatest risk. These include unaccompanied and separated children, people with disabilities, older people, cases of suspected trafficking, survivors of gender-based violence and refugees from minority backgrounds. Established by UNHCR and UNICEF with local authorities and partners along major crossing points, reception sites and urban centres, Blue Dots provide a safe space, support and referrals for health care, education, psychosocial support, legal aid provided by key legal actors and pro bono lawyers and more. In cities, UNHCR has set up Blue Dots linked to the cash enrolment centres, to identify persons at heightened risk. Building on this approach, **UNHCR is opening inclusive community centres** in Warsaw, Rzeszow and Lublin.



Information and Communication with refugee community

To address critical gaps in information, UNHCR has quickly set up and regularly updates a Poland page on the UNHCR HELP website for refugees, which has become the most visited page on the website, including from within Ukraine. The page includes a **child-friendly section in English, Polish and Ukrainian**. UNHCR has developed and circulates practical, safety and legal information to refugees at border points, in reception centers and urban areas, in the form of leaflets and posters, and on social media and via apps like Telegram, which people from Ukraine widely use. A **UNHCR counselling line** was set up to address questions on protection and cash assistance, operating in four languages (English, Polish, Ukrainian and Russian).



Cash Assistance

Cash assistance is one of the most efficient and effective ways to support people forced to flee, especially in fast-changing emergencies. Cash assistance respects the dignity of choice of refugees, allowing them to decide what they need most to support their family. UNHCR cash programme has now transitioned to **focus on the most vulnerable refugees**. In partnership with Santander Bank, and using BLIK as a payment method, refugees from Ukraine in Poland can receive cash quickly and safely without the need to open a bank account or having a card. Families can purchase goods and services from local businesses, which boosts the economy and fosters integration.



Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA), Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and anti-trafficking

UNHCR conducts awareness raising sessions on PSEA and anti-trafficking with refugees, partners and government officials **through training and dissemination of information, education and communication materials** in English, Ukrainian, and Polish languages. UNHCR is working with partners – including community-based organizations – to establish and run complaints and feedback mechanisms to prevent and end sexual exploitation and abuse, including through protection desks and protection monitoring. An updated referral pathway was **published** so that survivors of gender-based violence can get timely support.



Supplies

UNHCR is supporting the government and local authorities in Poland with emergency supplies to strengthen reception capacities. **As of 19 September, 82 truckloads with core relief items such as bed linen, blankets, hygiene kits, towels and diapers have been sent from UNHCR's main warehouse in Grabica to the municipalities** in Bialystok, Gdansk, Jaroslaw, Katowice, Kielce, Krakow, Lubaczow, Poznan, Rzeszow, Szczecin, Tarnobrzeg, Warsaw and Wroclaw for supporting refugees, including at reception and accommodation centres. From the onset of the emergency until the end of August 2022, UNHCR established a **logistical hub in Rzeszow**, just 100km from the Ukrainian border in south-east Poland, to deliver supplies into Ukraine for the increasing number of internally displaced people. **343 trucks have been dispatched up to date**, to deliver most-needed kitchen sets, solar lamps, sleeping bags, mattresses, towels, clothes, winter jackets, high thermal blankets and other life-saving items to UNHCR's warehouses in Dnipro, Lviv and Uzhhorod in western and central Ukraine.



Scale-up of capacity

UNHCR has been in Poland for 30 years, working with national authorities on refugee-related matters. With the Ukraine emergency, UNHCR has substantially **scaled up its presence and operations across Poland**. UNHCR currently has a Country Office and Frontex Liaison Office in Warsaw and has opened two field offices in Warsaw and Lublin, in addition to sub-offices in Rzeszow and Krakow. UNHCR increased its workforce **from 8 staff members to 110 in Warsaw, Krakow, Lublin and Rzeszow**.

Working with partners

UNHCR works with 8 international and national implementing partners to respond to the most pressing needs of refugees in Poland. These include ACTED/REACH, the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), the Halina Niec Legal Aid Centre, the Lutheran World Federation, International Medical Corps (IMC), Première Urgence Internationale (PUI), the Polish Center for International Aid (PCPM) and the Stowarzyszenie interwencji Prawnej (Association for Legal Intervention, SIP).

UNHCR leads the overarching refugee coordination structure in Poland, in support of the Government-led response. The thematic sector working groups include Protection (with sub-sector working groups on Child Protection, Gender-based Violence, Counter-trafficking, Third-country nationals, and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support); Health; Education; Shelter; Basic Needs, including Food Security, Water and Sanitation and Core Relief Items; and Logistics. In addition, there are transversal working groups on Cash, Information Management, Accountability to Affected Populations and a Network on Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.

UNHCR, together with 142 partners, has launched a comprehensive **Ukraine Situation: Regional Refugee Response Plan**, appealing for over US\$1.8 billion in support of the refugee response in the region until the end of December 2022, for a projected population of 8.3 million refugees. The **Response Plan chapter for Poland includes 87 partners (mostly NGOs) for a total budget of more than US\$740 million**. The Response Plan aims to complement, support and strengthen the national response to the refugee crisis in Poland and other refugee-receiving countries neighbouring Ukraine. Updated information on the response is available on the [UNHCR Poland Data Portal](#), including through dedicated pages for each Sector/Working Group.

Donors

UNHCR is grateful for the critical support provided by donors who have contributed to this operation as well as those who have contributed to UNHCR programmes with broadly earmarked and unearmarked funds.



And to organizations and private sector partners from:



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LINKS

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