



A group of refugees from Ukraine attend an event at the Oandu nature centre, organized by the Estonian Human Rights Centre and the Social Centre of Tallinn City Centre © UNHCR/Max-Michel Kolijn

## Operational context

Since 24 February 2022, Estonia has received a high number of refugees from Ukraine, amounting to more than 3% of Estonia’s population. From the outset of the war in Ukraine, the Estonian Government and civil society have responded with steadfast solidarity towards refugees from Ukraine, including by providing access to employment and public services. Challenges facing refugees from Ukraine include access to suitable accommodation, access to decent work for women, and access to medical support.

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

Following the increase in refugee and migrant arrivals via Belarus to Lithuania, Latvia and Poland in 2021, Estonia has adopted amendments to the State Border Act which allow for denial of access to the asylum procedure in situations of mass influx.

## Working with partners

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

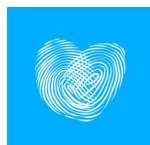
### KEY FIGURES

- 44,927 applications for temporary protection lodged by refugees from Ukraine since February 2022.\*
- 1,794 individuals granted asylum or subsidiary protection in Q1 2023
- 1,602 asylum applications lodged in Q1 2023
- 70,594 stateless persons.

\*Renewal of permits is ongoing and may result in changes of figures.



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Estonian Human Rights Centre



Estonian Refugee Council

## Highlights of UNHCR's and partners' activities



### COUNSELLING SERVICES

- UNHCR and partners provide information and legal counselling to new arrivals and refugees already in-country about asylum procedures, access to temporary protection and access to rights and services, among other issues. In the first quarter of 2023, 260 individuals were assisted with legal counselling by UNHCR's partner Estonian Human Rights Centre.



### PROTECTION MONITORING AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

- From January through March, UNHCR and partners organised 55 protection monitoring visits and community events in various locations including Tallinn, Pärnu, Jõhvi, Kohtla-Järve and Narva, reaching an average of 330 refugees and new arrivals per month. Participants primarily inquired about accommodation, jobs, education, protection, health and language issues.
- UNHCR and partners reached 199 refugees and 89 host community members through 4 workshops at schools focusing on forced displacement, refugees and integration. Three of the workshops were conducted using virtual reality headsets for immersive education experience. 15 Ukrainian teachers with refugee background and 23 Estonian teachers participated in trainings on teaching about forced displacement, including how to use interactive teaching tools, as well as methods to support mental health at school.
- 32 refugees were referred to services including psychological counselling, dental care and other healthcare services, as well as to a workshop to improve digital skills.



### GUIDELINES, TRAININGS AND SURVEYS

- In January, UNHCR published an Estonian translation of UNHCR's Guidelines on International Protection No.10: Claims to Refugee Status related to Military Service. The translation will be helpful for legal practitioners and case workers dealing with cases related to evasion of military service or conscription.



### INTEGRATION AND OUTREACH

- On 18 January, the Nordic-Baltic FOR-IN project seminar on integration was held at the Estonian Ministry of Culture in Tallinn. The FOR-IN project is a two-year integration project coordinated by the Nordic Council of Ministers and UNHCR. During the seminar, municipality representatives and other members of national delegations shared their experiences from earlier study visits. The aim is to reinforce local level reception and integration capacities and develop more holistic local level integration action plans in the municipalities of the Nordic-Baltic region.
- On 1 March, UNHCR visited the local government in Saaremaa island and on 29 March, the City of Paldiski in West-Harju Parish. In both municipalities, UNHCR met with the mayor and officials working on refugee integration, as well as refugees living in the municipality to discuss the situation of refugees from Ukraine, including good practices that could be shared and challenges encountered.



### COORDINATION

- On 22 February 2023, the Ukraine Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRP) was launched in Estonia. The RRP outlines the multi-partner and multi-sector response strategy and financial requirements of UNHCR and 13 partners helping refugees from Ukraine, complementing the government-led response. It provides all actors with a common plan and budget in support of government-led coordination. Meetings between the RRP partners are held on a monthly basis.