

## UNHCR Poland Operational Update

As of 15 July 2023.



Refugee children celebrating the Children's Day in a recreational event organized by the local authorities in Rzeszow, Podkarpackie region. @UNHCR.

### KEY FIGURES:



**966,630** refugees from Ukraine held active **PESEL** registration as of 11 July 2023. The cumulative number for PESEL applications since March 2022 is **1.6 million**.

**\$102.9 million**

Requested by UNHCR for its response in Poland in 2023. UNHCR programmes are funded through voluntary contributions.



## HIGHLIGHTS

- Intentions Survey:** UNHCR published on 7 July findings from the fourth round of a regional intentions survey for refugees from Ukraine, based on data collected in April-May 2023, interviewing 500 refugees in Poland (3,850 across Europe). Key findings for Poland include 71% of refugees expressed a hope to return to Ukraine, but had no immediate plans, while 17% intended to return within three months. Smaller proportions of refugees were undecided (8%) or had no desire to return (4%). Safety, security, and access to basic services such as electricity, water, healthcare, education, housing, and employment opportunities were essential in their decision-making about returning. Most refugees came from Ukraine's eastern and southern regions, with 14% reporting that their family homes had been damaged or destroyed. Two-thirds are currently residing in rented or co-rented accommodation in Poland. Findings for Poland were issued in [English](#) and [Polish](#).
- Supporting Government's Efforts:** UNHCR and Minister Agnieszka Scigaj member of the Council of Ministers responsible for social integration, have reinforced cooperation, based on a Letter of Intent (LoI) to support a social integration pilot initiative called "**We Need Each Other**". This programme was developed in collaboration with authorities, national and international organizations, and grassroots groups, with the aim of improving social cohesion and creating integration opportunities. The LoI signed by both parties allows UNHCR to provide expertise, share anonymized refugee data, and help with surveys and assessments, among other contributions. The programme will support **five projects in five different regions**: Podlaskie, Masovian, Małopolskie, Zachodniopomorskie, and Dolnośląskie. During the pilot phase, the programme will support **100 households** of Ukrainian refugees, including those in collective centres, and Polish citizens facing difficult life situations by helping them relocate outside major cities and become self-reliant.
- Cash Assistance:** UNHCR provides targeted cash assistance to some of the most vulnerable refugees to help them cover their basic needs. As of 15 July, **17,359 refugees** (7,954 families) have received cash assistance since the beginning of the year. Beneficiaries were enrolled through **six enrolment centres and mobile outreach teams** in Warsaw, Gdynia, Rzeszow, Lublin, Wrocław and Krakow.

## RESPONSE IN NUMBERS



### PROTECTION

**37,288** people received protection services and information at UNHCR-UNICEF Blue Dot Hubs and UNHCR Community Centres in 2023.



### CASH ASSISTANCE

**17,359** refugees received targeted cash assistance in 2023. Since the beginning of the crisis, some 306,000 refugees were assisted.



### ESSENTIAL ITEMS

**142,713** essential and core relief items delivered to authorities and partners in 2023.



### PROTECTION MONITORING AND PROFILING

**18,166** interviews conducted with refugees for protection monitoring and profiling in 2023.



### COUNSELLING LINE AND REGIONAL CONTACT CENTRE

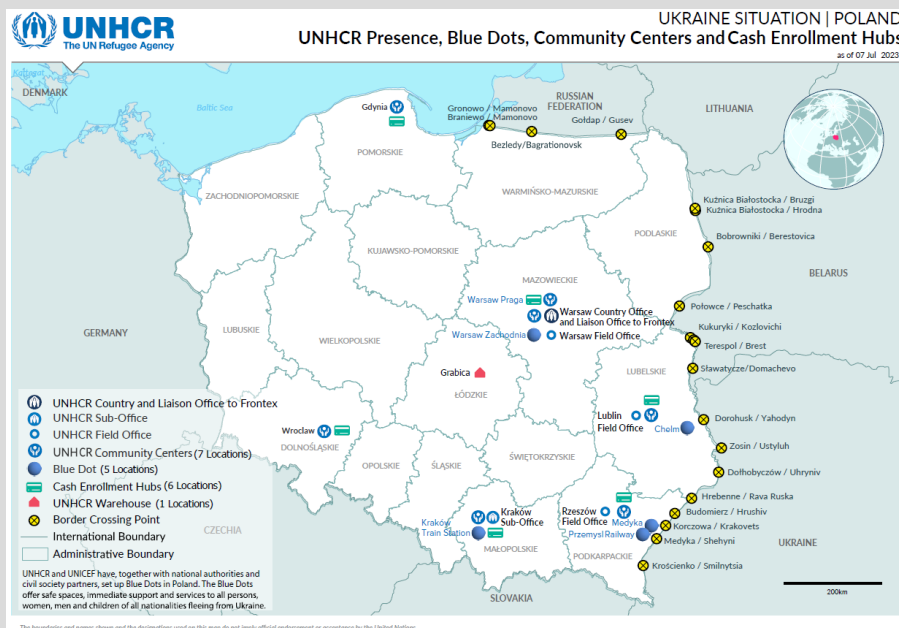
**29,896** calls received and attended through the counselling line and Regional Contact Centre in 2023.

- **World Refugee Day:** On the occasion of World Refugee Day (20 June), UNHCR and partners organised a wide array of events and initiatives across Poland, from 19-22 June 2023, aimed at fostering understanding and integration between refugees and local communities, including in collaboration with a famous Polish food critic and celebrity, Robert Makłowicz ([LINK](#)), a Polish mountain bike Olympic medallist Maja Włoszczowska ([LINK](#)) and the European Olympic Committees (EOC) Refugee Team, which competed in the 2023 European Games in Krakow - Małopolska. Prominent buildings, such as Warsaw's Palace of Culture and the Arena Lublin Stadium, were illuminated in blue. A series of workshops and conferences, musical performances, and art and photo exhibitions were held to raise awareness about refugee issues.
- **Community Engagement:** So far this year, UNHCR has signed **17 grant agreements with 12 grassroots and refugee-led organizations in Poland**. These organisations play a significant role in providing aid, such as legal assistance, education, healthcare, and child protection, directly to refugees, through engaging in community-based protection activities.
- **Economic Inclusion:** Between 16 February – 15 July, **UNHCR supported organizing and participated in eleven job fairs** in Warsaw and Siedlce (Mazowieckie), Poznań (Wielkopolskie), Wrocław (Dolnośląskie), Gdynia (Pomorskie), Katowice (Śląskie), Krakow (Małopolskie) and Rzeszow (Podkarpackie) regions. During the fairs, UNHCR provided information about employment and job opportunities, distributed leaflets and advocacy materials, and supported refugees in preparing their CVs. More than **9,450 job seekers**, including refugees, visited the job fairs.
- **Shelter Response:** UNHCR and partner CORE finalised shelter upgrades and minor repairs for **three collective accommodation centres** in the Podkarpackie region with the capacity to accommodate around **300 refugees**. A similar project is currently being implemented in the Lubelskie region, also through the same partner, targeting three collective accommodation centres. In 2022, UNHCR and partners already targeted 12 collective accommodation centres in Podkarpackie and Lubelskie with thermal upgrades and minor repairs, with an accommodation capacity of over 2,000 refugees.
- **Community-Based Protection Activities:** Mainly provided through **four UNHCR-UNICEF Blue Dot Hubs and seven UNHCR Community Centres**. Those serve as one-stop shops providing a variety of targeted protection activities and enhancing the concept of community participation. They are also a space for community-driven initiatives, with a focus on activities promoting social cohesion. Both Blue Dots and Community Centres are located in key refugee-hosting areas, ensuring appropriate outreach to the refugee community. Since the beginning of the year and as of 15 July, more than **37,288 refugees** have received some form of support at the Blue Dots and Community Centres.
- **Mobile Outreach Teams:** UNHCR and partners reached more than **7,000 refugees** with multifunctional mobile teams, as of 15 July. Those activities were provided to vulnerable refugees who were unable to reach centres run by UNHCR or others, providing them with social and psychological counselling, identifying refugees with specific protection needs and referring them to specialised services, while conducting protection monitoring and disseminating accurate information about available services.
- **Counseling Line and Regional Contact Centre (RCC):** **UNHCR has established a Regional Contact Centre** to enhance its communication with communities and accountability to affected populations, where Poland-based operators attend refugees' phone calls. It is a **toll-free mechanism (800 012 948)** to **provide information and carry out referrals to specialised services**. The Contact Centre also has a feature to **report cases of misconduct and fraud**. Since the beginning of the year and as of **15 July, 29,896 calls** have been attended; 96% of the queries received were about the cash programme, followed by general protection and housing-related queries.
- **Capacity-Building:** UNHCR, IOM, and INTERPOL delivered from 15-19 May training sessions on combatting Sexual Exploitation and Abuse to 130 officials from the Polish National Police, Border Guards, the Office for Foreigners and Frontex. The training was specifically tailored to the refugee context in Poland and provided insights on how to identify Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and how to respond to survivors with a victims-centred approach.
- **Legal Counselling and Assistance:** More than **12,731** refugees and asylum seekers received legal aid by UNHCR's legal partners so far in 2023. The legal assistance was provided in urban settings, border crossing points, detention centres and reception facilities.

## OPERATIONAL CONTEXT

- UNHCR works to promote effective access to territory and asylum, fair and efficient asylum procedures, and documentation for asylum seekers, refugees, stateless persons and persons at risk of statelessness, in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior, Border Guards, Office for Foreigners and other relevant authorities and civil society.
- The Government of Poland has enabled access of refugees from Ukraine to its territory, including through simplified border control procedures in the early days of the emergency, and the adoption (12 March 2022) of the *Act on Assistance to Ukrainian Citizens in Connection with the Armed Conflict in the Territory of this Country*, referred to as the “Special Act”, providing them with broad protection and access to services and social benefits on par with the Polish citizens, when conditions are met.
- On 23 July 2022, the Government of Poland introduced the “first fully digital residency permit” for Ukrainian refugees, [diia.pl](https://diia.pl). This electronic document is issued to Ukrainian citizens who crossed the Polish-Ukrainian border on or after 24 February 2022 and allows them to cross the Polish borders and move freely within the Schengen area (provided that they have a valid travel document). A recent amendment to the “Special Act” granted children under 13 years of age access to this document.

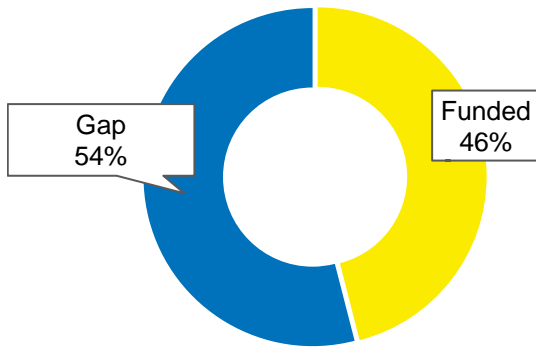
## POLAND: UNHCR Presence – 7 July 2023.



FUNDING (AS OF 27 JUNE 2023)

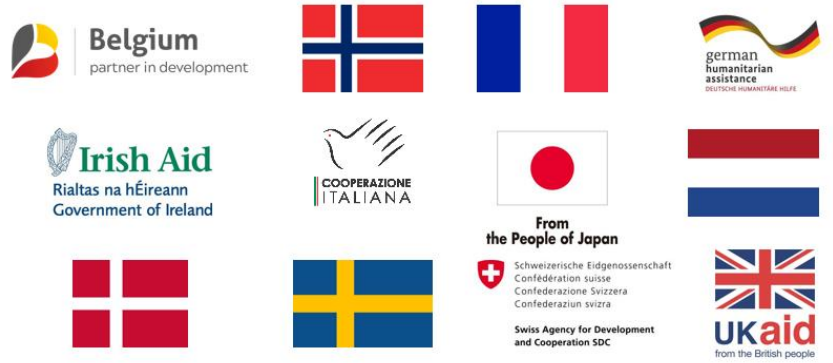
**US\$ 102.9 M**

REQUESTED FOR THE UKRAINE  
EMERGENCY SITUATION FOR POLAND



## Donors

UNHCR is grateful for the critical support provided by donors who have contributed to this operation in 2023, as well as those who have contributed to UNHCR programmes with broadly earmarked and unearmarked funds.



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