



# Belarus

1 April - 30 June 2023

All border crossing points between Ukraine and Belarus have remained closed on the Ukraine side since April 2022. Refugees displaced from Ukraine continue to arrive in Belarus through Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, and the Russian Federation.

Refugees from Ukraine in Belarus have strong family links and social connections within the Ukrainian diaspora. Additionally, they share a common language and historical ties with their host country. Approximately 40% of refugees are being hosted by relatives or friends, while approximately 29% have found accommodation in self-rented apartments or houses. Another 9% are being hosted by local families\*\*\*.

Most Ukrainian refugees have settled in urban and peri-urban areas, with Minsk City being the primary destination, followed by Brest (6851), Gomel (5134), Grodno (4185), Minsk Region (3850), Vitebsk (2286), and Mogilev (2125). Most households are composed of women, children, and older people, highlighting the prevalence of family separation among displaced persons.

## KEY FIGURES\*

30,930

Individual refugees from Ukraine recorded in the country (as of 30 June\*\*)

28%



16%



28%



28%



\* See the [Operational Data Portal for the Ukraine Refugee Situation](#) and the [Belarus portal page](#) for more details on refugee population figures and information resources.

\*\* Figures are based on estimated presence utilizing Department of Citizenship and Migration (DCM) monthly data.

\*\*\* Figures are based on [Inter-agency Protection Monitoring and Profiling 2023 survey](#) coordinated by UNHCR.

## Operational context

As of June 30, 2023, the Ministry of Interior's Department on Citizenship and Migration (DCM) has reported that approximately **30,930** citizens of Ukraine, who entered Belarus after February 24, 2022, are currently residing in the country. Among them, an estimated **2,936** people have formally applied for asylum, and during the reporting period, approximately **2,208** of these applicants have been granted complementary protection. The remaining people are awaiting decisions on their asylum applications.

## Sectoral Achievements



## Protection

### Achievements and Impact

The joint protection response aims to minimize protection risks faced by refugees upon arrival in Belarus and address their most immediate needs by supporting timely and person-centered access to information, legal assistance, psychosocial support, and material assistance, including but not limited to cash-based interventions.

During the period April to June 2023, UNHCR, IOM and UNFPA assisted 2,224 people with protection-based activities including legal assistance, community-based psychosocial support activities, and support through helplines.

Protection profiling and monitoring continued during the reporting period. The results of [Inter-agency Protection Monitoring and Profiling 2023 survey](#) are accessible on the [Ukraine situation data portal](#). The results are based on 879 respondent interviews covering 2,040 people (conducted between April and mid-June 2023).

IOM facilitated the voluntary return of third-country nationals to their countries of origin with two Israeli nationals who fled Ukraine due to the war returned to their country of origin.

UNICEF signed a new partnership agreement with the Ministry of Internal Affairs that focuses on strengthening the capacity of the ministry and its relevant departments in areas such as child safeguarding and working with vulnerable refugee (and migrant) children; addressing policy issues and developing mechanisms for unaccompanied and separated children as well as strengthening data systems for gender and age disaggregated data.

A task force led by UNFPA, with UNHCR, UNICEF was established under the Operational Working Group, and delivered the first joint protection training on May 24 to 30 people, including legal protection, GBV prevention and response, Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, and child protection. The next training is due to be held in September.



## Child Protection

### Achievements and Impact

Significant achievements have been made in child protection during the second quarter of 2023, particularly in strengthening child protection systems across the country. A major focus has been on expanding outreach efforts and establishing effective referral mechanisms.

UNICEF supported MHPSS services covering overall 3441 people comprising 552 boys and 513 girls. Through more children are becoming aware of their rights and are being connected to the necessary services they require. This progress marks a significant step forward in enhancing the well-being and safety of children in the country.

### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

Strengthened outreach resulted in identifying additional refugees in need, who are provided with additional information and referred to various programmes and services. Refugee families with children require longer-term MHPSS support. There is also a need for adequate needs assessment processes and referral mechanisms related to child protection. C

Capacity of service providers has been identified and is planned to be strengthened through joint training organized by RRP partners.



## Gender-Based Violence

### Achievements and Impact

The third UNFPA supported Orange Safe Space for Ukrainian refugees was opened in Vitebsk city. The services in Orange Safe Spaces and crisis centres were expanded to include physical activity and art therapy classes to support mental and psychosocial health among older people from Ukraine, reaching 107 people during the reporting period.



More than 219 people in the Brest oblast, 241 people in the Gomel oblast (women, older people, and persons with disabilities), and 45 older women in Vitebsk oblast benefited from tailored psychosocial counselling. At least 159 women, over 69 older people, and 18 people with disabilities were referred to adequate services and support, particularly for medical care, employment, temporary shelter, food, and hygienic goods. 500 hygienic kits and 200 underwear sets were distributed in the Orange Safe Spaces. A Crisis Centre operated by the Red Cross in Brest City and Vitebsk City and supported by all UN agencies provided accommodation, specialists'

support, and counselling for 15 Ukrainian women in Brest and 7 Ukrainian women in Vitebsk.

Joint training for partners led by UNFPA. Photo by @UNFPA



## Education

### Achievements and Impact

The Inter-agency Protection Monitoring and Profiling 2023 indicated 56% of school-aged children are now enrolled in formal schools, demonstrating improved access to education for a larger portion of the refugee population. Additionally, 45% of respondents in the survey reported having access to childcare services, further contributing to the well-being of children in the country.

UNICEF has played a vital role in supporting refugee children's access to education with approximately 150 boys and girls provided with learning materials, ensuring that children have the resources they need to continue their education effectively.



Psychological first aid workshop. Photo by ©UNHCR

In May, UNHCR organized a psychological first aid (PFA) workshop for 13 frontline staff of partners and local authorities, Refugee Counselling Services and Gomel City Social Service Centre for families and children. The PFA workshop aimed to equip the participants with skills to understand, recognize and respond to basic signs and symptoms of stress and distress amongst the refugee population as well as self-care strategies.

### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

There is a need to strengthen population data in relation to children and increase outreach to vulnerable families with children.



## Health and Nutrition

### Achievements and Impact

During the reporting period, the main focus was on ensuring refugees' access to national health services and contributing to strengthening the capacity of the national health system to respond. Special attention was given to covering the costs of specialized medical services for those in need. Inter-agency Protection Monitoring and Profiling revealed that 67% of respondents did not encounter difficulties in accessing health care services.

Throughout the reporting period, 9,165 people benefited from awareness-raising sessions on health services, which helped to educate them about available healthcare options. Moreover, 253 people received health consultations, ensuring that they received the necessary medical attention. Mental health consultations were also prioritized, with 938 people supported to address the crucial mental health needs.

UNICEF played a crucial role in enhancing child protection by conducting awareness-raising sessions on health services. These sessions reached a total of 3,888 people, comprising 542 girls and 604 boys. The sessions aimed to ensure that children are well-informed about available health services and to promote their access to essential healthcare.

### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

Not identified.



## Basic Needs

### Achievements and Impact

Significant achievements were made in addressing the basic needs of vulnerable persons in Belarus, thanks to joint UN efforts. UNHCR, IOM, UNFPA, and UNICEF supported assistance to 5,995 people. Housing kits, which included kitchen sets, appliances, and furniture, were distributed to 74 people, ensuring they had the necessary items to establish a functional home. Hygiene kits were provided to 2,753 people. Moreover, 1,085 people received food packages, ensuring they had access to nutritious meals and immediate food security. Multi-purpose cash assistance was also distributed to 1,588 people, providing them with financial flexibility to prioritise their needs. For 19 people, accommodation in accommodation centres was provided for a safe and supportive living environment. Additionally, 76 people were assisted with private premises, offering them secure living arrangements.

Overall, efforts to meet basic needs had a substantial impact on the well-being and living conditions of refugees ensuring they have access to essential resources.

### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

There is a need to strengthen population data in relation to children and increase outreach to vulnerable families with children.



## Livelihoods and Socio-Economic Inclusion

### Achievements and Impact

During the reporting period, significant achievements were made in promoting livelihoods and socio-economic inclusion for refugees in Belarus. UNHCR and IOM played key roles in providing assistance to people seeking to improve their economic opportunities.

UNHCR and IOM assisted 339 people during this period, with a specific focus on enhancing their employment opportunities and financial inclusion. Among the beneficiaries, 41 people received employment-related legal aid from IOM, ensuring their rights and interests were protected in the workplace. Furthermore, 15 people commenced vocational training in various fields such as nail art, hairdressing, welding, and fitness services, equipping them with valuable skills to pursue job opportunities. Support for entrepreneurship and financial inclusion was provided to 49 people, empowering them to establish and grow their own businesses. Additionally, 57 people received assistance in accessing employment, helping them secure job placements suited to their skills and qualifications.

UNDP's Accelerator Lab conducted human-centred research of the refugees' socio-economic inclusion journey by applying design thinking methodology. The following areas were assessed: border crossing, accommodation, determination of the legal status, household management, social protection, employment,

education (reskilling and upskilling as well as education for children), healthcare, and psychosocial support. The research will lay the ground for cross-sectorial discussions with partners to develop measures facilitating the socio-economic inclusion of refugees.

## **Coordination and Working in partnership**

In line with UNHCR's Mandate, the Refugee Coordination Model (RCM) is implemented in Belarus to support the government-led response. The Refugee Coordination Forum (RCF) ensure strategic direction, oversight of RRP implementation, and contingency planning and preparedness for potential increases in new arrivals.

The Operational Working Group (OWG) and Information Management Working Group (IMWG) are central to promoting coordination and mitigating duplication for effective and efficient use of resources. Ad-hoc taskforces also support the RCF with technical and response capacities.

During the reporting period new products were developed and launched including the Ukraine population displacement dashboard and the RRP progress dashboard.

IOM | UNDP | UNFPA | UNHCR | UNICEF | WHO

### **CONTACTS**

**Donna Corcoran**, Inter-Agency Coordination Officer,  
corcoran@unhcr.org, Tel: +375 44 565 9172

**Maryia Andryianava**, Senior Communications Assistant,  
andryian@unhcr.org, Tel: +375 17 328 69 61

### **LINKS**

**[REGIONAL DATA PORTAL – UKRAINE SITUATION RRP – RRP RECALIBRATION – BELARUS RRP SUMMARY DOCUMENT – REFUGEE FUNDING TRACKER](#)**