

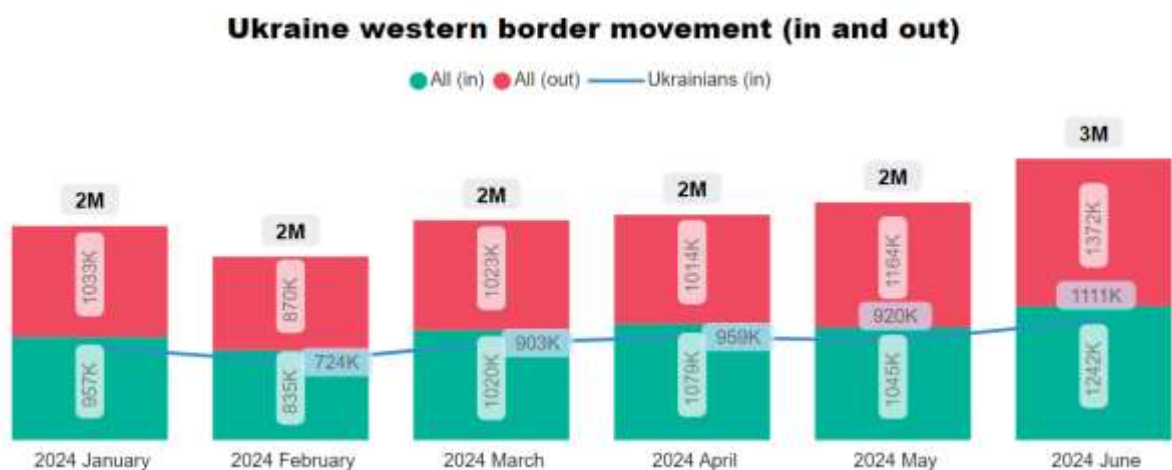


**UNHCR UKRAINE BORDER MONITORING
AT INTERNATIONAL BORDER CROSSING POINTS**
(Borders between Ukraine, the EU and Moldova)
June 2024

Buses with people in the waiting area near Shehyni BCP, June 2024. © Right to Protection.

Since mid-March 2022, UNHCR and its local NGO partners Right to Protection (R2P), NEEKA, and The Tenth of April (TTA), have conducted border monitoring at 30 crossing points between Ukraine and Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Moldova. The border monitoring teams provide information, legal assistance, protection counselling and social support to people leaving Ukraine to seek international protection as well as to those returning to Ukraine.

1. Overview: Cross-Border Movements (in and out)



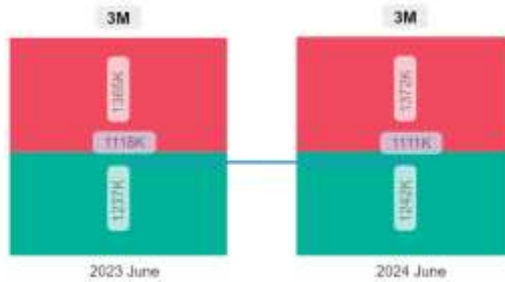


Figure 1 and Figure 2: Number of people crossing international borders with Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and Romania. The figure does not include data on border crossings with Moldova. Source: State Border Guard Service (SBGS) of Ukraine.

There has been a continuous increase in cross-border movements starting from February, with the highest net outflow in the first half of the year (~130K) recorded in June. Year to year comparison reveals that there were 400K fewer overall crossings in 2024. However, the figures for June 2024 almost mirror cross-border movements in June 2023. The increased outflow is attributed to the beginning of vacations, school holidays, and seasonal work opportunities abroad.

2. Key monitoring findings

General observations

Intentions regarding staying in or leaving Ukraine have considerably changed in the first half of 2024 in comparison to the same period in 2023.

Intentions to stay abroad

There has been a 7% increase in the share of individuals planning to permanently stay abroad (9% in the first half of 2024 compared to 2% in the same period of 2023). Interviews at the border indicate an increasing number of people who are uncertain about the duration of their stay abroad, also indicated by the 46% of respondents who did not know how long their stay abroad will be (as compared to 39% in the first half of 2023). This uncertainty is driven by the security escalation in frontline areas compounded by attacks against energy infrastructure and related consequences, including the energy blackouts. Prolonged power cuts have far-reaching consequences, impacting access to basic services, such as health, and contributing to economic decline. As a result, the energy situation negatively affects people’s lives in a multitude of ways.

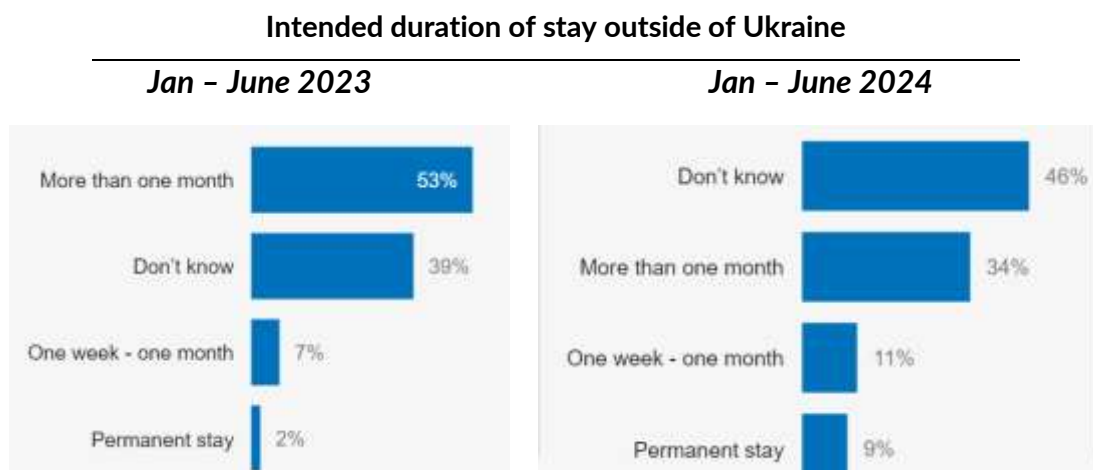


Figure 3: Data based on UNHCR border monitoring 2023 - 2024.

Intentions to stay in Ukraine

In summer 2023, an increase of returns intended to be permanent was observed following the end of the school year in the respective host countries, in particular when flight had resulted in family separations. A year later, the situation looks different. There is a drastic increase in the number of people entering for a short visit. Among those interviewed upon entering Ukraine, the vast majority intended to stay for less than four weeks

(84% in the first half of 2024, compared to 36% in the same period of 2023). Conversely, those who plan a longer-term stay (more than 4 weeks or permanently) dropped from 63% in 2023 to 16% in 2024. The reasons for returns remain relatively unchanged and include visiting relatives, care taking responsibilities and checking on property as the top three reasons for returning to Ukraine.



Figure 4: Data based on UNHCR border monitoring 2023 - 2024.

Reasons to leave the country¹

The deterioration of the security situation remains the main reason for leaving the country. It is cited by nearly 98% during the first half of the 2024. Departures for reasons related to forced conscription halved by June 2024 compared to May. The starkest change in June are departures due to the energy-related reasons, notably challenges in accessing electricity, water and heating. While this reason was not prominent before, in June, it surged to 25%. Border monitors inform that many departing for this reason indicate that their intention to stay abroad is for a shorter term, there is an increasing uncertainty prevailing over the duration of stay abroad as noted above.

Public information by the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine (SBGS) on cross-border movements

Cases associated with risks of exploitation/abuse. During the monitoring period the SBGS published several instances amounting to a possible exploitation:

- [Local resident of Chernihiv](#) pursued women with disabilities (1st or 2nd group) to enter into a marriage to enable men's border crossing. Generally, such women are in a vulnerable situation and often experience financial constraints. According to these reports, women were asked to marry men of conscription age and further travel with them abroad for a remuneration.
- Another [case](#) is also connected with men of conscription age crossing the border, who were expected work in an agricultural company in Moldova as a payment of the services related to the facilitation of the irregular border crossing.

Intercepted attempts of groups of men to cross the border. The SBGS reports numerous intercepted attempts of irregular border crossing by men of conscription age. In previous months, these attempts typically involved individuals. However, in June, there is a significant increase in smuggler-organized attempts of irregular border crossings of groups of men. The largest group intercepted consisted of 47 individuals. Notably, at least two incidents in June 2024 involved minors assisting the smugglers. In these cases, children were either transporting equipment such as boats and diving suits for crossing the border or guiding men to potential

¹ In accordance with the methodology of survey, interviewed people are able to choose multiple reasons of leaving the country.

crossing points. The cost for such irregular crossing is reported to be high at EUR 12 000 per person. In one of the interviews, SBGS spokesman mentioned that some men paid USD 18 000 – 20 000.

SOUNDBITES FROM THE BORDERS

The following are key observations by UNHCR partners' border monitors for the month of June 2024:

- The holiday season is ongoing and border monitors continue to report large number of buses in Lvivska oblast, with very long waiting times at border crossing points of 7 to 9hrs at some of the BCPs.
- High temperatures cause health risks for travelers. Border monitors reported several cases of need for medical attention due to the exposure to weather during the long waiting times at borders.
- Generally, border monitors confirm that the denials to cross the border for men of conscription age have decreased as most carry now the required documents.
- Border monitors in Odeska oblast noted a decrease in the number of trucks at the borders which is linked to the obligation of male truck drivers to update their military registration documents.
- Border monitors reported increased anxiety among families leaving Ukraine for the first time. This is reportedly due to the deterioration of the security situation for families coming from areas closer to the front line and when they were in proximity to impacts of air strikes in different parts of Ukraine.

3. Support provided at the border crossings in June 2024

In June 2024, UNHCR partners, R2P, NEEKA and TTA, conducted **285 monitoring visits to the BCPs** with Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Moldova. During these visits, UNHCR's partners provided different forms of support to **1,280 individuals** who crossed the border. This support included a range of services, including 1,205 instances of protection counselling and 175 instances of legal assistance, while 65 persons received social accompaniment and 2 individuals received transportation services.

Overall, from January to June 2024, UNHCR partners supported **7,980 individuals** crossing the borders.

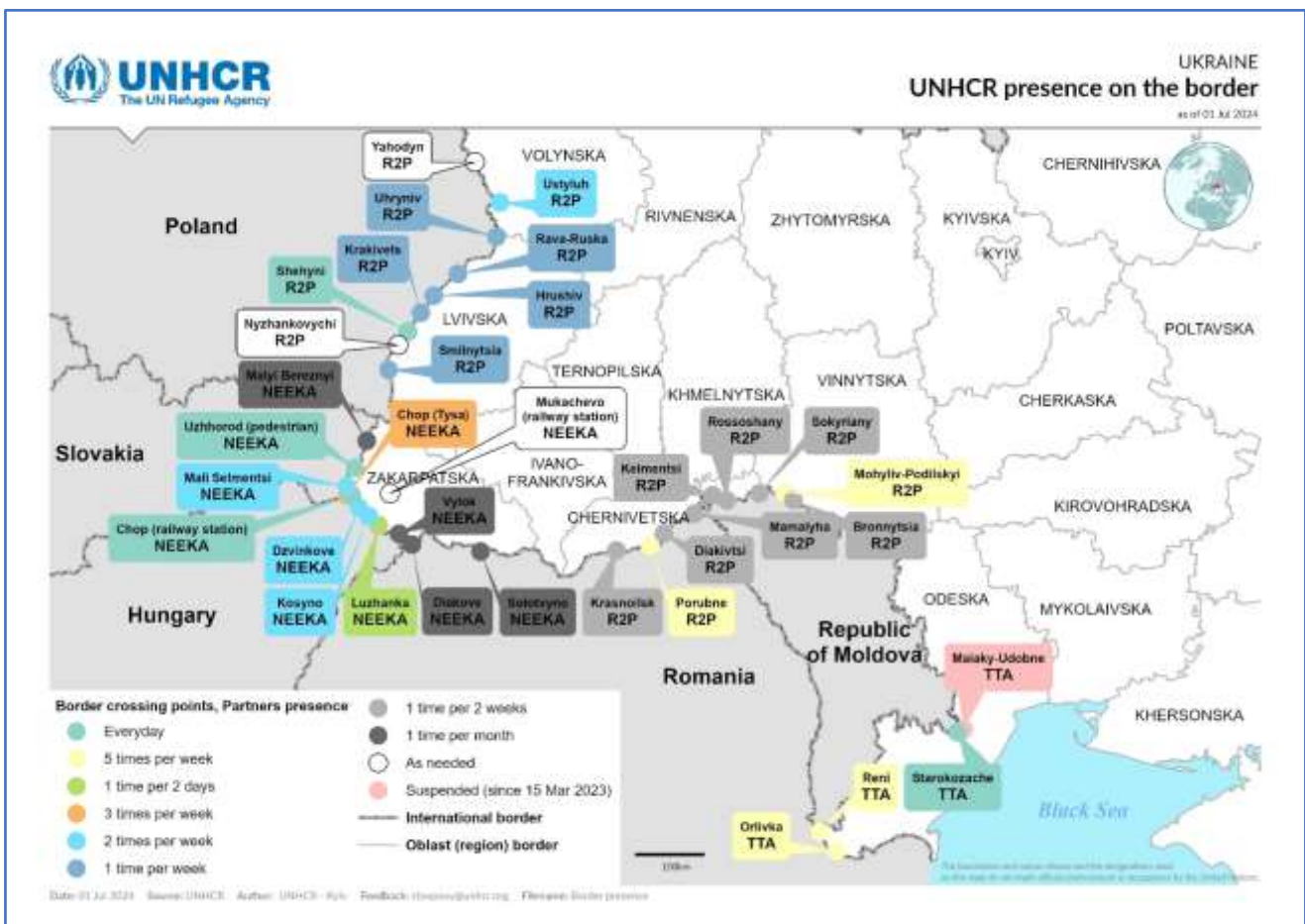
Note on Methodology

From January to June 2024, a total of 19,345 people were surveyed by UNHCR partners at the borders. In June 2024, UNHCR partners surveyed 3,124 people (comprising 72% females 18-59 years of age, 11% males 18-59 years of age, 7% females 60+ years of age, 9,5% males 60+ years of age, 0,5% females 0-17 years and 4% persons with disabilities).

Since mid-March 2022, UNHCR has deployed border monitoring teams through local NGO partners to provide information and assistance to people crossing the border with EU countries (Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania) and Moldova. These teams provide information, legal assistance, protection counselling and social support to people leaving Ukraine to seek international protection, as well as to those returning to the country.

Border monitoring teams conduct individual interviews with people who are exiting and entering Ukraine. The purpose of these interviews is to gather information about the individual circumstances, reasons for moving and their protection needs. The border monitoring methodology is focused on assessing and responding to the protection and humanitarian needs of people crossing the border between Ukraine and the EU countries and Moldova. By conducting interviews, gathering data, and providing necessary support, the goal is to enhance protection measures and ensure the well-being of those who are on the move.

The monitoring findings are based on individual interviews conducted with people crossing the border, both those entering and exiting Ukraine and other observations made by the border monitors.



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

- See Border Snapshot for March 2024 [here](#), April 2024 [here](#), May 2024 [here](#).
- Visit Ukraine’s Operational Data Portal for more information products [here](#).
- Visit UNHCR Ukraine’s Website [here](#).

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