

Poland

11 March 2022

Since 24 February, over **1.5 million** refugees have arrived from Ukraine to Poland, at a rate of over 100,000 new arrivals per day in recent days. Of those, **90 percent** are women and children. The Polish Government has removed legal and procedural entry restrictions for refugees from Ukraine, facilitating access to territory through eight land border crossing points (BCP).

Since before the influx began, the Polish government has **committed to reception services** for refugees from Ukraine, including at the border, at nearby reception facilities, and in host cities across the country. Nevertheless, the speed and scale of refugee arrivals have strained existing systems to respond. The reception centres are heavily reliant on a groundswell of volunteerism among Polish citizens.

Demographic profiles of arriving refugees—including unaccompanied children, children accompanied by an adult of unknown kinship, and vulnerable young women—elevate **protection risks**, notably related to child protection, trafficking, and gender-based violence, alongside mental health and access to information needs.

HIGHLIGHTS

+2,504,800

Total number of refugees fleeing Ukraine since 24 February 2022.

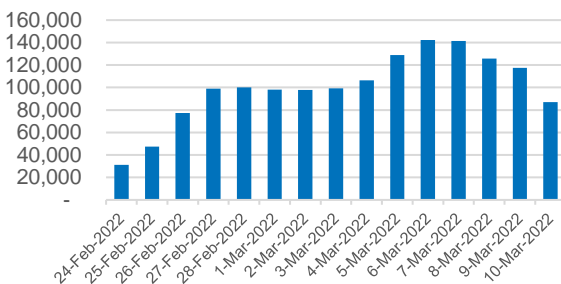
[11 March 2022], Source: UNHCR

+1,520,000

Refugee arrivals from Ukraine to Poland since 24 February 2022

[11 March 2022], Source: Polish Border Guards

DAILY ARRIVALS



Newly arriving refugees approach the Polish border. 6 March 2022. © UNHCR/Jessica Caplin

Please see the [Operational Data Portal](#) for the Ukraine Refugee Situation for additional details. Sign up for the [UNHCR mailing list](#) to receive regular updates on the Ukraine Situation.

Operational Context

- As of 11 March, **over 1.52 million refugees** have arrived from Ukraine to Poland.
- The Polish government has lifted most legal and procedural entry restrictions for refugees from Ukraine. This includes exceptions to COVID requirements and an opening of BCPs to arrivals. UNHCR continues to monitor reports of non-Ukrainian citizens facing secondary screenings and challenges to access territory.
- **Nearly all arrivals are women, children, and older persons**, as men aged 18-60 are required by Ukraine authorities to remain in Ukraine.
- A brief levelling of daily arrivals to just under 100,000—linked to rapid processing by both Ukraine and Polish Border Guard—surged from 4 March, with over 100,000 new arrivals each day. This surge corresponds to a return of **long queues of cars and pedestrians on the Ukrainian side of the border** in freezing temperatures with little access to basic services.

Reception

- **The Polish government has committed to reception services** for refugees from Ukraine, including at the border, at nearby reception facilities, and in host cities (including access to healthcare, accommodation, and education).
- Arriving refugees are provided with basic hot food and water at the border.
- Those who express a need for help are directed to a bus for transport to a reception facility, overseen by voivodships. These centres are outfitted with basic resources and supported by volunteers.
- In both border areas and onward interior cities, reception logistics have been delegated to local authorities. Some sites are already **facing strain**.
- During the first week of influx, of 280,000 spaces to accommodate arrivals, less than 5% were occupied, suggesting early arrivals had destinations in Poland; however, rail stations and urban reception centres are increasingly filled with new arrivals without a clear destination.
- Longer-term, public services (healthcare, housing) may also be strained.



Piles of donated children's toys await distribution by volunteers at Medyka Reception Center along the border with Ukraine. 6 March 2022. © UNHCR/Jessica Caplin

Humanitarian Needs and Response

- Rapid processing (basic identity check), though critical for alleviating **humanitarian concerns** linked to long queues, raises other protection concerns due to **missing biometric registration**. This is notably the case for children, many of whom arrive without documentation.
- While early arrivals may have had resources and destinations in Poland, **newer arrivals are less resourced and increasingly disoriented, distressed, and without an onward plan**.
- Demographic profiles (including unaccompanied children, children accompanied by an adult of unknown kinship, and vulnerable young women) and limited collection of identity data elevates risk factors for **child protection, gender-based violence (GBV) and exploitation, and trafficking**.
- Mental health and psychosocial support (**MHPSS**) needs for new arrivals fleeing conflict and separation from family members must also be addressed
- Need for **access to information** is also repeatedly stressed upon arrival



PROTECTION

- UNHCR has maintained presence at the border since 24 February to **monitor** trends and identify resource needs in support of the Polish government.
- **UNHCR's emergency Cash Assistance Programme for refugees from Ukraine in Poland launched** on 11 March in Warsaw, in partnership with Caritas. In addition to distribution of emergency cash, the programme as envisioned will use enrolment data at designated enrolment centres as an entry point for protection. The programme will use a community-based approach to identify vulnerable refugees in need of assistance and to share information for other protection interventions. UNHCR is the first agency delivering cash assistance to refugees from Ukraine in Poland. The programme will scale-up to other cities in Poland in the coming days. Read UNHCR's **briefing note on the cash assistance** [here](#).
- UNHCR is presently responding to a sharp increase in calls, emails, and in-person requests for information and has developed **informational resources** in English and Ukrainian for immediate circulation. **UNHCR Poland's Help page** is being updated regularly with information, including materials on protection from fraud and access to international protection.
- Through its legal partner, The Halina Nieć Legal Aid Centre, UNHCR is supporting **access to information and legal services**.
- UNHCR is also actively engaging in **community outreach** with Ukrainian diaspora community organizations, to share information and identify support.
- UNHCR is in discussion with other UN agencies and humanitarian actors for implementation of complementary protection interventions, including **child protection and GBV**.



SHELTER AND NFIS

- UNHCR is liaising with authorities and other actors for **provision of supplies** to those in queues on the Ukrainian side of the border, through a local partner.

- In preparation for further intervention in Ukraine, UNHCR is **moving core relief items** to the vicinity of the border with Poland in a newly established warehouse in Rzeszow.

Working in partnership

- UNHCR is leading coordination of the overall regional refugee response and the [Regional Refugee Response Plan](#). Specifically, UNHCR is leading the Protection Sector, GBV Sub-Sector, Technical Cash Working Group, Basic Needs Sector and the Logistics Sector.
- UNHCR is conducting ongoing outreach to Ukrainian diaspora community-based organizations for inclusion and partnership.
- UNHCR continues its regular engagements with Government officials, embassies, UN partners, and I/NGOs.



Newly arriving refugees at the Polish border crossing are offered hot tea while they await processing. 6 March 2022. © UNHCR/Jessica Caplin

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LINKS

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