

Moldova Refugee Inter-Agency Gender-based violence sub-working group (GBV SWG) Update #01 – April 2022

SITUATION OVERVIEW

With the vast majority of refugees in Moldova being women (65%) and children (36%), **addressing the protection of women and girls** is of utmost concern. A significant proportion of the refugees are women-head of households, single women, adolescent girls, older women, who are at **heightened risk of GBV**. Urgent action is needed to prevent gender-based violence (GBV) and respond to its life-threatening consequences.

Increased risks exist of conflict-related sexual violence, trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation, sexual exploitation and abuse by humanitarian workers, as well as pre-existing and increased displacement related risks of intimate partner violence. Risks of GBV are increased in the context of informal shelter, reception and transit facilities, refugee accommodation centres, private arrangements for transportation from the border to transit facilities and onward to other countries.

ACHIEVEMENTS- PROGRESS MADE SO FAR

- GBV SWG national member organizations are at the forefront of the refugee response
- Linking refugee emergency response to existing mechanisms with clear **GBV referral pathways** to lifesaving multi-sectoral response services and cash assistance, air transfer programs, and safe entry points such as 24/7 blue dots, trust line for women and girls by La Strada.
- **Established and strengthened GBV coordination** as part of the refugee coordination forum; the GBV SWG currently includes 34 partners.
- **126 frontline responders trained on prevention and response to GBV and trafficking in persons:** the GBV SWG partner organizations trained 72 and UNHCR 54 Government officials, NGOs, UN staff, and volunteers on GBV core concepts and referral mechanisms, including Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA), and trafficking in persons.
- **68,000 refugees were reached with anti-trafficking awareness messages:** 60,000 anti-trafficking awareness leaflets distributed by IOM at border points, transit locations and central authorities, and awareness sessions at Palanca. In addition, a total of 2,000 flyers with 'stay safe' and hotline messaging were distributed, reaching 8,000 people through



Photo Credit UNFPA

collaboration between UNHCR, IOM, La Strada and Moldova for Peace.

- **Safety in key hot spots improved:** site safety audit tools were developed through systematic safety auditing (14 safety audits conducted by the GBV SWG partners). Tailored GBV risk mitigation and anti-trafficking measures have been integrated, safe disclosure and referrals strengthened, with an emphasis on improving safety in high-risk locations such as the bus hub in Palanca and Refugee Accommodation Centres.
- **Awareness materials development:** through community consultations and testing, La Strada, in partnership with UN Women, is developing video materials to raise awareness about GBV in the humanitarian refugee context.
- **Women and Girls Safe Space services:** UNDP, in partnership with the Executive Committee of Autonomous Territorial Unit (ATU) Gagauzia, is running a safe space with integrated shelter, social assistance, legal and PSS services for refugees and host community members. 79 refugees have been supported by the safe space.

GAPS AND WAY FORWARD

- Strengthening and expanding capacities of frontline and specialized actors and community outreach, awareness-raising, safe spaces and mobile services, including refugees and host communities in hot spots and across the country.
- Support national and local systems to scale up response and capacity, ensuring increased timely access of refugees and the host community to holistic survivor-centred GBV services.
- Joint development of key messages to advocate for GBV concerns in the refugee context.

- Ensuring solid risk mitigation measures across the response through regular and ongoing safety assessments to inform GBV risk mitigation actions and contextualised guidance for different sectors.

BRIEF - KEY STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES & WORK AREAS

Effective coordination and planning

- Planning and implementation of Refugee response plan (RRP) and GBV SWG strategy through joint workplan
- Joint assessments and trend analysis
- Joint advocacy, communication materials and campaigns
- Collaboration with local actors, in particular, women-led organizations

Access to lifesaving GBV prevention and multi-sectoral response programming

- Support, link, and complement existing national systems and capacities
- Safe access to holistic case management, legal counselling, psychosocial support safety services and women and girls' safe spaces (WGSS)
- Access to clinical management of rape
- Response services are included in referral pathways and guided by SOPs
- Community outreach and awareness raising
- Capacity development and expansion

Integration of GBV risk mitigation measures

- Cross-sector collaboration
- Tools, capacity development and sector-specific planning on mainstreaming GBV risk mitigation



Photo credit: UN women

GBV Sub-working Group (GBV SWG)

UNHCR, together with UNFPA, leads the GBV response for refugees in Moldova. The aim is to transfer co-leadership to a local organization. The GBV SWG meets every Friday at 2 pm.

The GBV SWG has a strong network of 34 partners including 5 local organizations, 17 INGOs, 10 UN and 1 intergovernmental organization.

Law Center of Advocates | La Strada | Women Law Center | Life Without Violence Action Coalition representing 25 local women organizations and GBV providers | Moldova for Peace | Intersos, Plan international, MSF, Oxfam, Caritas Germany, ACTED, APS-Action Aid, Mercy Corps, IsrAid, Catholic Relief Services, WeWorld, Medical Teams, IRC, Help Age, IMC, Project Hope, Church World Service | UNHCR, UNFPA, UN Women, UNICEF, IOM, UNDP, UN AIDS, OHCHR, WHO, OSCE