



# UKRAINE SITUATION

## GREECE UPDATE | #2

24 May 2022

Refugees fleeing Ukraine cross the eastern borders by bus © UNHCR/Caroline Bach

### BACKGROUND

Over 30,100 refugees from Ukraine have arrived in Greece. Their main entry point is through the Bulgarian land border and the international airports of Athens and Thessaloniki. For many, the journey continues to other parts of Greece where they have friends and family.

Refugees from Ukraine are primarily concerned about long-term accommodation, finding work, accessing healthcare and covering their basic needs like food and medicines. Many left behind loved ones and had traumatic experiences before coming to Greece and are in need of psychosocial support. As the majority of refugees are women and children, it is very important to help address dangers like trafficking and sexual violence for them.

The Government of Greece is coordinating the response to refugees from Ukraine. UN agencies, NGOs, local authorities, civil society organizations, volunteers and the private sector are all providing support.

By 19-May, 13,400 Ukrainians had received Temporary Protection in Greece, and 15,306 refugees overall had registered their applications.

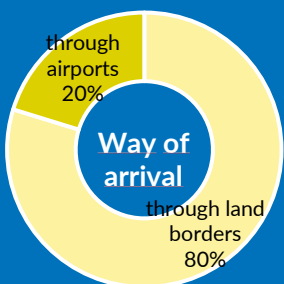
Cumulative # of arrivals in Greece:

**30,108**

refugee arrivals in Greece from Ukraine

**1 in 4**

are children



Source: Ministry of Citizen's Protection

## UNHCR RESPONSE

UNHCR supports the Government, and helps coordinate the efforts of UN agencies, NGOs and civil society organizations. The Office has led an inter-agency assessment of the needs of Ukrainian refugees and also regularly monitors the situation of refugees upon arrival at the border. This helps inform the Government and organizations on how to address the refugees' needs. UNHCR also offers proposals to the authorities to help the implementation of Temporary Protection and the delivery of assistance. The Office is helping refugees from Ukraine by expanding its regular refugee programmes with Ukrainian and Russian speakers and interpreters, and by stepping up its support to the authorities where required, such as on child protection, prevention of sexual violence and in communicating with Ukrainian communities. UNHCR is also supporting Ukrainian community organizations and volunteers, empowering them to address needs

### RECEPTION

At the northern border, UNHCR staff and interpreters help the authorities communicate with new arrivals and register their information. They also inform refugees on temporary protection and asylum procedures in Greece, and where to find help and accommodation. UNHCR coordinates with municipalities, NGOs, volunteer groups and Ukrainian communities in Northern Greece to map the services and offers of support available to refugees. The Government and organizations can use this information to direct people to the help they need. This month, UNHCR donated blankets, sleeping bags, mattresses and 12,500 items of personal hygiene and COVID-19 protective equipment to the municipality of Thessaloniki, in recognition of its support to vulnerable people.

### CHILD PROTECTION

UNHCR strengthened the National Emergency Response Mechanism (NERM) – the State mechanism to help unaccompanied and separated refugee and migrant children. UNHCR funds three additional staff located at the main border point of arrivals from Ukraine. NERM, through NGOs Arsiv and the Network of Children's Rights, identifies unaccompanied and separated children, takes them to safe accommodation and informs the Public Prosecutors so as to ensure assessment of the children's best interests and family links. UNHCR also shared a set of recommendations with the authorities on the registration of

separated children for temporary protection, which the Government endorsed.

### COMMUNICATION WITH COMMUNITIES

UNHCR regularly meets Ukrainian communities who are helping the recently arrived refugees find a home, food, and other support. This way UNHCR and other agencies understand the problems that refugees face, and can assist the Government and other actors best respond to their needs. The Office also supports the work of refugee communities and volunteer organizations by providing them with computers and other technical equipment, trainings, information and other types of support. In May, UNHCR delivered 13,000 food and non-food items to Ukrainian volunteer communities in Thessaloniki to distribute to refugees from Ukraine.

To ensure that refugees have access to useful and reliable information and know where to get help, UNHCR has translated its [HELP website](#), information leaflets and the Mini-Lexicon Booklet with key Greek phrases into Ukrainian. UNHCR's helpline has also been reinforced with Ukrainian and Russian-speaking staff, to provide information but also identify cases that need specialized assistance.

### PREVENTION AND RESPONSE TO GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

UNHCR is working with the Ministry of Labour, NGO partner A21, and Ukrainian communities in Athens and Thessaloniki to help identify potential cases of sexual violence and trafficking. UNHCR is also raising awareness through providing trainings to volunteers in Athens and Thessaloniki, and by disseminating information leaflets on this very important danger, to which the Ukrainian population, mostly made up of women and children, is particularly exposed to.

### PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT

UNHCR is expanding its programme with NGO EPAPSY that offers psychosocial support to refugees, including by hiring a Ukrainian community psychosocial worker who provides refugees with assistance and guidance in their own language.

### PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS

UNHCR is liaising with private sector companies interested in helping Ukrainian refugees to channel their support where it is needed. This month, UNHCR is working with a mobile phone service provider to distribute 5,000 SIM cards to refugees in Athens and Thessaloniki.

### CONTACTS

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