



Moldova: Situation overview

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

People fleeing from conflicts are at higher risk of conflict-related sexual violence, sexual exploitation, and abuse by humanitarian actors, trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation, as well as pre-existing and increased displacement related risks of intimate partner violence. Risks of GBV are exacerbated in the context of informal shelter, reception and transit facilities, refugee accommodation centres, private arrangements for accommodation and transportation from the border and movement to other countries.



ACHIEVEMENTS- PROGRESS MADE SO FAR

- Through the Refugee Coordination Forum, the GBV sub-working group has **strengthened GBV coordination** and currently includes 51 government agencies, NGOs, and UN agency partners. The sub working group (SWG) national member organizations are at the forefront of the refugee response.
- The GBV SWG launched the **GBV Standard Operating Procedures** development process to provide core guidance to all GBV response and prevention actors in the Moldova refugee response.
- **507 frontline responders trained on prevention and response to GBV:** in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior, this month UNICEF joint with INTERPOL provided training on GBV response and anti-trafficking to 136 police officers working at border and other hotspot locations throughout Moldova.
- **Assessments:** Voice Amplified and HIAS shared 'Waiting for the Sky to Close: The Unprecedented Crisis Facing Women and Girls Fleeing Ukraine' assessment [report](#) for Moldova. The report indicated the need to improve women and girls' role in designing and leading humanitarian programs, increased resourcing for local women's organizations, and to rapidly scale up GBV prevention and response.
- **GBV Safety Audit:** UNHCR and UNFPA, jointly with different humanitarian sectors and partners, have conducted a participatory GBV safety audit (focus



Orange Safe Spaces provide support for refugee women
Photo Credit: UNFPA

groups, interviews, observational walks) with refugees in key refugee locations of Moldova (accommodation centres, border points, in host community locations). A safety audit toolkit has been adapted to the context. Concerning GBV and trafficking risks were identified, as well as gaps in GBV response. Findings and recommendations will be shared and GBV mainstreaming plans developed with all sectors.

- **Conflict related sexual violence:** The GBV SWG supported the visit of the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict to Moldova. The Special Representative urged that we should not wait for hard data to scale up response for survivors in the humanitarian context.
- **Access to emergency GBV medical care:** UNFPA has provided post-rape treatment kits to hospitals in ten districts as well as to the INTERSOS health project at the Palanca border. UNFPA is training health professionals on the Clinical Management of Rape to ensure comprehensive care for GBV survivors. UNHCR and UNFPA as GBV SWG co-chairs presented GBV health guidance and priorities to 50 participants from the Health Working Group.
- **Cash Assistance:** UNHCR has provided multi-purpose cash assistance to 56,625 individuals including 26,815 women and 3,284 adolescent girl refugees in Moldova. Cash support is vital to reduce GBV risks and to respond to survivors needs. UNHCR cash centres have GBV trained women Protection staff to support referrals for survivors to access cash as well as to specialized GBV services.
- **Women and Girls Safe Space services:** UNFPA Orange Safe Spaces were established through local partners in Congaz and Ocnița accommodation centres, with four Orange Safe Spaces now operational in Moldova. The spaces provide psychosocial support, dignity kits, and information on sexual and reproductive health services. UNFPA has distributed 12,500 dignity kits to women and girls since the beginning of the refugee response.



Frontline responders trained on GBV and anti-trafficking response. Photo Credit: UNICEF

- **GBV Awareness materials:** GBV referral cards and posters have been developed and shared, to raise awareness in the refugee community, in particular for women and girls, on GBV services and risk reduction. The materials were created by UNHCR and UNFPA, in coordination with the GBV SWG and with refugee community participation.

➤ GAPS AND WAY FORWARD

- Strengthen and build capacities of frontline and specialized actors and community outreach, awareness-raising, safe spaces and mobile services for refugees and host communities in at risk areas such as border, transit locations, and private and refugee accommodation as well as across the country.
- Support for national and local systems to scale up response and capacity, ensuring access to quality holistic survivor centred GBV services for refugees and host communities.
- Advocacy messages about Gender equality, prevention, and response to gender-based violence in a refugee context in Moldova.
- Mainstreaming GBV prevention and risk mitigation through ongoing safety audits to inform emergency preparedness and response.



BRIEF - KEY STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES & WORK AREAS

Effective coordination and planning

- Planning and implementation of the Regional Response Plan and Gender-Based Violence sub-working strategy through joint workplan
- Collaboration with local actors' women-led organizations
- Transfer co-leadership to a local organization.
- Joint assessments and trend analysis
- Joint advocacy, communication materials and campaigns

Access to lifesaving GBV prevention & 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

- Regular coordination and guidance with all humanitarian sectors on GBV mainstreaming
- Tools, resourcing, capacity development and sector specific planning on mainstreaming GBV risk mitigation

About GBV Sub-working Group: UNHCR in collaboration with Authorities and UNFPA leads the GBV response for refugees in Moldova. The GBV SWG has a strong network of 51 partners including representatives from the Department for Gender Equality of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, local organizations (including Life Without Violence Action Coalition representing 25 local women organizations and GBV providers), INGOs, UN agencies, and intergovernmental organizations.

Members: Law Center of Advocates | La Strada | Women Law Center | Women's Initiatives | Life Without Violence Action Coalition representing 25 local women organizations and GBV service providers | Moldova for Peace | Homecare | Help Age | INTERSOS | Plan International | MSF | Oxfam | Caritas Germany | ACTED | APS-Action Aid | Mercy Corps | REACH | IsrAid | Catholic Relief Services | WeWorld | Medical Teams | IRC | Help Age | IMC | Project Hope | Church World Service | Voice Amplified | War Child Holland | French Red Cross | Emergency | HIAS | BRF | UNHCR | UNFPA | UN Women | UNICEF | IOM | UNDP | UN AIDS | OHCHR, WHO | OSCE

SWG group meeting link: The GBV SWG meets every Thursday at 2 pm.
<https://unfpa.zoom.us/j/87952733936?pwd=Y25LRUQ0OS9rcEI2K2ZlZlNuQy9RUT09>
 (English- Romanian- Russian interpretation)

Data portal - Moldova inter-agency response:

<https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine/location/10784>

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