



Belarus

30 June 2022

The Government of Belarus allows all refugees from Ukraine to access Belarusian territory and asylum procedures if they wish to seek protection. Third country nationals fleeing the war in Ukraine and traveling to their countries of origin or permanent residence are allowed to enter, transit and exit Belarus visa-free. All COVID-19 restrictions have been lifted at border crossing points.

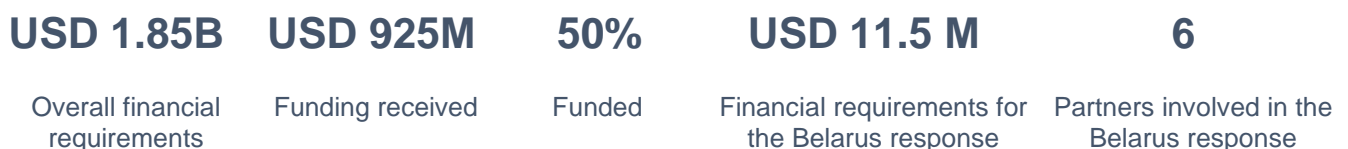
Since the second half of April, arrivals of refugees directly from Ukraine remain very low. Most refugees from Ukraine transit through the EU, mostly through Poland, and self-accommodate in Belarus with relatives or friends. Others are supported by the local authorities and partners in identifying accommodation and employment opportunities.

The Government leads the response to the Ukraine refugee situation in Belarus, with the Belarusian Red Cross Society (BRCS) being the recognized channel of international aid delivery and distribution. An inter-agency Refugee Coordination Forum (RCF) led by UNHCR has been established at country level to complement the Government's efforts.

KEY FIGURES (as of 30 June)*



REGIONAL REFUGEE RESPONSE PLAN (RRP) FOR THE UKRAINE SITUATION**



*See the [Operational Data Portal for the Ukraine Refugee Situation](#) for more details on refugee population figures and information resources. The statistics are based on data provided by the State Border Committee (SBC) of Belarus. The figures reflect border-crossings and may include pendular and transit movements. The age and gender breakdown are estimates based on data collected by the BRCS as of 23 May 2022 (sample size: 1,578 individuals).

**See the [Ukraine Situation Regional Refugee Response Plan](#) and the [Belarus Summary Document](#) for a breakdown of sectoral response priorities and requirements. See the [Refugee Funding Tracker](#) for RRP funding information.

This report was produced by UNHCR in collaboration with inter-agency partners.

Operational Context

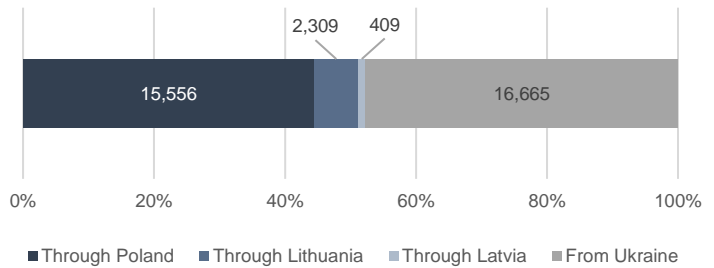
As of December 2021, Belarus was host to 2,732 refugees and 128 asylum-seekers. Amongst those, 2,378 refugees and 14 asylum-seekers were Ukrainian nationals, most of whom arrived in Belarus due to conflict that had erupted in the eastern Ukrainian regions of Donetsk and Luhansk in 2014. Asylum-seekers and refugees also come from other countries of origin, such as Afghanistan, Syria and Iraq.

A total of 34,940 refugees from Ukraine have crossed the border to Belarus from 24 February to 30 June. 244 persons are third country nationals (including from Azerbaijan, Georgia, Israel, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, USA). Valid ID documents or international passports are not required for persons seeking protection in Belarus. 18,275 persons have transited through EU countries before entering Belarus, while 16,665 have crossed directly from Ukraine. Due to the absence of border controls, it is unclear how many Ukrainians are transiting through Russia.

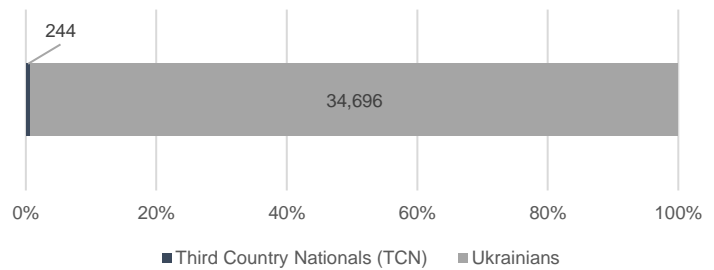
Since 24 February and as of 28 June, 9,745 refugees from Ukraine have registered with the Ministry of Interior (MOI) for a legal status in Belarus. 5,816 Ukrainians have been recorded by the MOI's Department on Citizenship and Migration (DCM) as persons with permits for temporary stay up to 90 days. 1,070 Ukrainians have applied for asylum in Belarus. Out of those, 398 have been granted complementary protection. The other applications remain pending. 1,910 have applied for 1-year temporary residence permits. 949 have applied for permanent residence permits.

During the first two months of the crisis, refugees from Ukraine were sheltered in temporary accommodation facilities (TAFs). These have been vacated because the sanatoria were needed for commercial purposes. Refugees who were temporarily accommodated at the TAFs were assisted by the BRCS and local authorities in identifying employment with accommodation opportunities or other private accommodation.

30,499 refugees from Ukraine have crossed to Belarus (since 24 February 2022)*



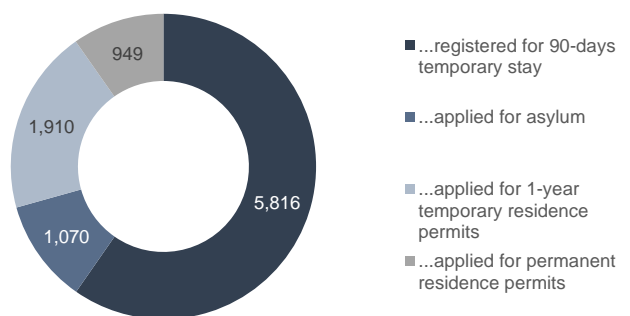
Third Country Nationals*



Registered refugees from Ukraine**

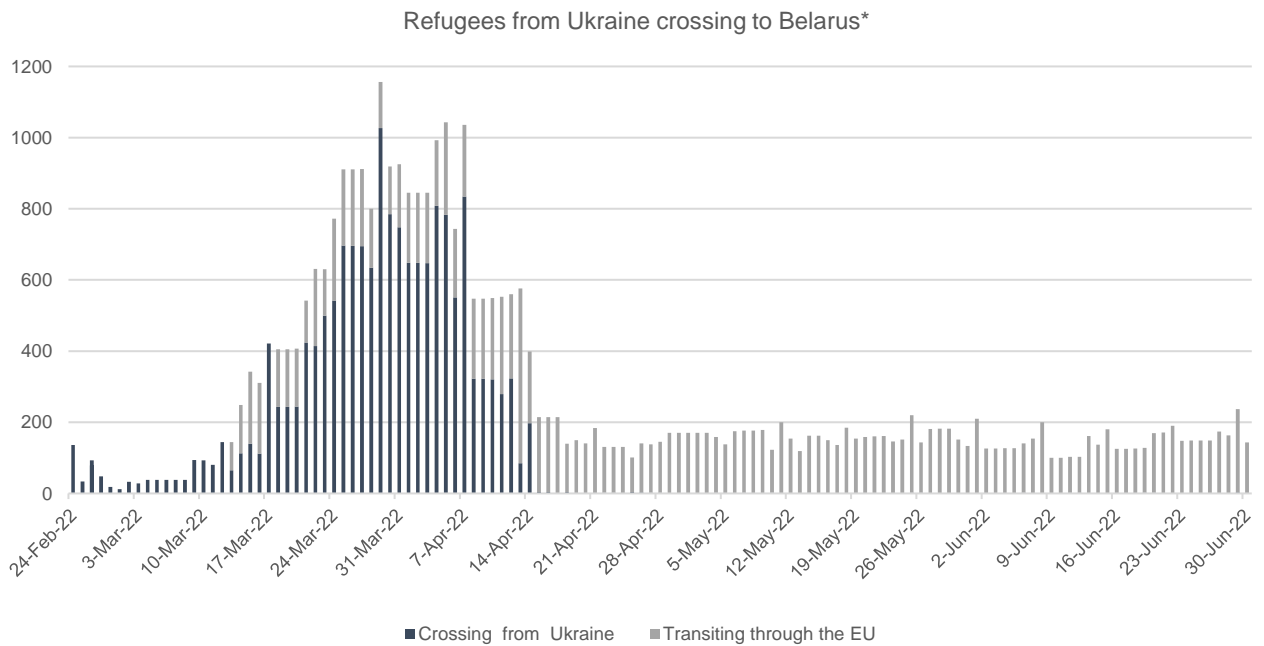


Registered refugees from Ukraine that have...**



Refugees from Ukraine in Belarus originate from all regions of the country, particularly from Donetsk, Luhansk, Kharkiv, Chernihiv and Kyiv. Groups of people at heightened risk include elderly people; women at risk; female-headed households; children, especially unaccompanied and separated children (UASC); people with disabilities; and people in need of medical support. The number of people fleeing from Ukraine to Belarus is relatively small compared to other neighbouring countries. However, the Government and inter-agency partners need to be prepared for an increase in arrival numbers as the crisis in Ukraine unfolds in an unpredictable manner.

Inter-agency partners continue to strengthen the response in Belarus, supporting Government-led efforts by fostering solidarity and collaboration, responsibility-sharing, and inclusion in national responses and local host communities, in line with the guiding principles of the [Global Compact on Refugees](#) (GCR).



*The statistics are based on data provided by the State Border Committee (SBC) of Belarus. The figures reflect border-crossings and may include pendular and transit movements.

**The statistics are based on data provided by MOI's DCM.



PROTECTION

Achievements and Impact

UNHCR regularly monitors the **access to territory, temporary stay, and asylum procedures, as well as reception conditions** of refugees from Ukraine. UNHCR provides legal counselling and referrals to asylum procedures through the joint project “Refugee Counselling Service (RCS)” together with its national legal partner, Belarusian Movement of Medical Workers (BMMW). This includes third country nationals who may be in need for international protection and who are not covered by the temporary stay arrangements for Ukrainians. From the beginning of March to end of June 2022, 998 persons (533 cases) have been counselled by the RCS at their offices and through phone calls. Out of those, 584 persons have applied for asylum in Belarus and 414 benefitted from temporary stay arrangements for Ukrainians. The RCS also conducted five visits to TAFs where it provided counselling to about 120 persons through individual and group sessions. The information provided to refugees includes how to lodge an asylum application in Belarus, other options for regularization of stay / residence in Belarus, modalities for employment, as well as regulations and practical aspects related to medical treatment, education, and receipt of allowances from the Government, including pensions. In addition, UNHCR has counselled 78 refugees from Ukraine through its hotline and counselling sessions at its office in Minsk.

IOM assists nationals of third countries who are not in need for international protection to voluntarily return to their countries of origin when it is possible to do so in a safe and orderly manner. Two nationals from Tajikistan have been assisted in returning to their country of origin and two persons with dual nationality (Ukrainian-Russian) were assisted in moving to Russia.

UNICEF has signed a case management partnership agreement with a Gomel-based CSO “Let’s Help Children Together” to assess and identify the needs of families with children and refer them to the relevant services. Since the end of May and until the beginning of July, 85 families with 123 children (58 girls and 65 boys) have benefitted from case management in Gomel and Brest regions through the partner. UNICEF with other UN agencies is partnering with MOI’s DCM to strengthen inter-agency mechanisms for case management, referral and support to **unaccompanied and separated children (UASC)**.

Inter-agency partners are also working towards supporting the Government and local partners in providing assistance and psychosocial support to **women survivors and those at-risk of gender-based violence (GBV)**. UNFPA and the BRCS Gomel and Brest branches established a counselling and referral mechanism based on the emerging needs of women, elderly persons, and persons with disabilities. The piloted mechanism will be scaled up in other oblasts of the country. UNFPA supported the establishment of Orange Safe Spaces in Gomel and Brest for counselling and service provision particularly for women, elderly women, and women with disabilities. UNFPA supported the establishment and equipment of the BRCS crisis center in Brest, which will serve as an entry point for immediate support and referral for essential services, primarily for Ukrainian refugee women with children and elderly people. The crisis center has been operationalized on 16 June and is fully equipped for temporary accommodation of up to 10 persons, including infants and children.

UNFPA has conducted three trainings for 47 service providers and volunteers on GBV prevention, gender-responsive services and protection from **sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA)** in humanitarian settings and is planning to conduct additional trainings in different regions until the end of the year in collaboration with UNICEF. In June, UNFPA conducted two sessions on burnout prevention and stress resistance for volunteers, who work with refugees from Ukraine in Gomel region.

Given the high percentage of female headed households, elderly and disabled people who lack a regular income, **one-time emergency cash assistance** is the most effective method of providing dignified assistance and gives the recipient a choice of prioritizing their needs. UNHCR supports refugees from Ukraine with specific needs or vulnerabilities with one-time emergency cash assistance through its partner – the BRCS. A Commission on Assistance assesses the cases and decides whether the conditions for cash payment are fulfilled. The family or individuals receive the payment either in cash or on their bank card if available. In June, 435 individuals were assisted with one-time emergency cash assistance (129 women, 72 men, 48 girls, 61 boys, 89 elderly women, 36 elderly men). The largest group of vulnerable persons were elderly people, followed by persons with serious medical condition, women at risk, single parents, and persons with disabilities. In assessing the needs of refugees, UNHCR takes into consideration that some families may need additional payments, which may be granted on a case-by-case basis and depending on the availability of resources.

Global Compact on Refugees

Multi-purpose cash assistance enhances refugee self-reliance in line with the objectives of the GCR. It serves as a transitional safety net pending the individual's ability to find a job or be included in national social protection schemes. Families can purchase goods and services from local businesses which boosts the economy. Most importantly, cash assistance respects the dignity of choice and independence of people forced to flee, and gives them a sense of normality and ownership, allowing them to decide what they need most to support themselves and their family. In June, 435 individuals were assisted with one-time emergency cash assistance.

A key response priority is **psycho-social support (PSS)** particularly for children and their caregivers, women, older persons, and persons with disabilities, who might have experienced stress and anxiety including those who witnessed violence. A psychosocial mobile team was started by UNICEF. Until the end of June, 264 children (142 boys and 122 girls) benefitted from PSS activities. 1,000 copies (5,000 printed in total) of psychological first aid information material on dealing with stress and assisting children in situations of anxiety, including support available in Belarus, have been distributed by UNICEF among refugees from Ukraine in TAFs in Gomel and Brest regions. Among other activities to commemorate World Refugee Day (WRD) on 20 June, UNHCR purchased tickets for refugee children in need of stress relief and entertainment. 31 tickets were purchased for a family recreation center in Gomel, 14 tickets for the theatre in Brest, and 52 tickets for the circus in Minsk.

Inter-agency partners are collaborating on conducting **joint training sessions**. UNICEF has joined a two-days PSS training organized by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) for 20 BRCS specialists and volunteers with a session on psycho-social support for children in conflict situations. Through UNICEF's partnership with the Republican Center for Psychological Aid, 90 pedagogues and psychologists working with children and refugees, volunteers and frontline workers of the BRCS, NGOs and service providers received training on working with children in crisis situations and stress resilience for frontline workers. Within the framework of UNDP's support for the BRCS, 165 volunteers and specialists were trained to provide assistance to refugees, including psycho-social support.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

Inter-agency partners are working together towards strengthening the capacity of the BRCS in **collecting age and gender disaggregated data** under the leadership of UNHCR. These efforts will provide a better understanding and regional comparability of the profiles, intentions and needs of refugees coming from Ukraine to Belarus. This analysis is important for forward programme planning.

After the TAFs have been vacated to use the sanatoria for commercial purposes during the tourist season, partners are adapting their programming to the **rapidly changing situation on the ground**. Refugees who

were temporarily accommodated at the TAFs were assisted by the BRCS and local authorities in identifying employment opportunities with accommodation or other private accommodation. Partners are therefore working with refugees who are dispersed through all regions of the country and adapt their services accordingly.

UNDP Accelerator Lab partners with the BRCS to develop a **digital platform** that will better connect refugees with support services and opportunities available for them across Belarus. The platform will also be used by BRCS volunteers as a tool to support counselling for refugees. UNDP advocates for digital solutions that are inclusive. The platform will benefit also local communities and vulnerable groups. The design of the platform will be demand-driven and informed by the results of a continuous needs assessment of the target groups. Capacities of the target groups will be considered to ensure the accessibility and user-friendly presentation of the information.

More assistance will be needed particularly in the areas of **child protection** and **GBV prevention and responses** with focus on children, women, elderly, and persons with disabilities. Children and women fleeing Ukraine face enormous and multiple protection risks that require strengthening system measures to respond to immediate needs for safety, stability, and protection from risks of violence, exploitation and potential trafficking. UASC and other children at heightened risks, need to be identified immediately and referred to protection services, appropriate alternative care arrangements, and other assistance.



EDUCATION

Achievements and Impact

Refugee children from Ukraine have access to the national preschool and school education system and most do not face a language barrier to access education.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

School administration, teachers and other education specialists require additional support to identify and respond effectively to children's heightened levels of distress. UNICEF is working with key partners, including local authorities, social-pedagogical centers, BRCS and other Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to strengthen and scale-up Safe Space programmes in schools in the regions where there may be a high presence of refugees, in particular in Gomel and Brest regions. The programme has been submitted to the Ministry of Education for accreditation to enable the integration of refugee children from Ukraine in the new school year.



HEALTH AND NUTRITION

Achievements and Impact

To address the current crisis situation, the Ministry of Health (MoH) issued a letter, which stipulates that Ukrainian citizens who fled to Belarus through “humanitarian corridors” are eligible to receive medical treatment on an equal level as citizens of Belarus. The services are available in the local out- and in-patient

healthcare departments in all regions where refugees from Ukraine are accommodated. These measures will be further defined in a normative act, which exempts citizens of Ukraine and stateless persons who have resided in Ukraine “for not less than one year” and are coming to Belarus “to obtain permits for temporary and permanent residence” from payment for medical services provided by state healthcare organizations.

IOM established referral pathways for refugees from Ukraine with serious medical conditions to the Gomel regional hospital and to Minsk medical institutions for further **medical examination and treatment** and covers related costs. If needed, one-time agreements with medical institutions in other regions can be concluded to ensure medical support for refugees in these regions. Six beneficiaries were referred to the medical institutions for further assistance. Another 9 persons benefitted from other types of medical support (e.g., payment for medicines, PCR tests).

UNFPA established a referral procedure for sexual and reproductive health services (SRH) to healthcare facilities in Minsk and Gomel region and covers the costs of **women health care** above the national standards (e.g., some diagnostic procedures). So far, two high-cost medical interventions were covered for 2 Ukrainian women staying in Belarus.

WHO in collaboration with the MoH and BRCS reallocated parts of four **medical kits** and proposed to redistribute 5,000 COVID-19 rapid tests, which were previously delivered to Belarus for the mixed movements situation at the EU-Belarus border, to the Ukraine refugee situation. Each medical kit can be used for providing medical care and treatment for a population of 10,000 for three months. One part of the medical kits has been distributed to healthcare facilities in Gomel region. IOM has procured a pack of vouchers, which can be used by beneficiaries for the procurement of medicines in local pharmacies. 60 beneficiaries were supported with these vouchers.

IOM has hired one psychologist to receive referrals from psychosocial services and provide follow-up **mental health consultations** to those in need. 41 refugees and migrants have so far received psychosocial support and psychological assistance and counselling.

An online **training on immunization** and health for BRCS specialists was organized by UNICEF. 18 BRCS specialists from across Belarus were trained on main child immunization issues and the importance of immunization promotion for Ukrainian refugees; access to healthcare services for Ukrainian refugees; and availability of hotline support for children and parents in crisis situations including for victims or witnesses of violence and/or abuse.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

Some groups of people fleeing from Ukraine to Belarus, particularly adult third country nationals who are still in the asylum procedure, will have to pay for most medical services that go beyond emergency medical treatment. According to some reports, the letter by the MoH leaves room for interpretation in regions other than Gomel region. Individual cases of persons in need for medical treatment whose medical expenses were not covered have been reported. Given the circumstances and possible loss of income, such individual cases need **financial support or medical services provided free of charge**, particularly the most vulnerable.

As per the needs assessed, many refugees arriving from Ukraine need **mental health services** that go beyond psychosocial support. There are acute manifestations of mental health issues and psychological distress in children and adolescents, women, and elderly persons who fled from Ukraine.



FOOD SECURITY

Achievements and Impact

More than USD 40,000 have been allocated by UNHCR to the BRCS to provide supplementary food in TAFs in addition to the usual three meals a day. This amount covered the needs for supplementary food for up to two months. In addition, UNHCR allocated almost USD 20,000 for the provision of food parcels.

Since the closure of the TAF, IOM started to provide direct assistance to refugees from Ukraine and third country nationals not in need for international protection. As of 30 June 2022, 274 individuals were assisted directly with food kits. IOM re-channelled for distribution in all regions of Belarus 12,400 food kits that had been purchased previously by BRCS.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

The BRCS tent transit points at the border crossing points are currently not operational because of low arrival numbers directly from Ukraine. BRCS has the capacity to re-open the transit points whenever and wherever the need is identified.



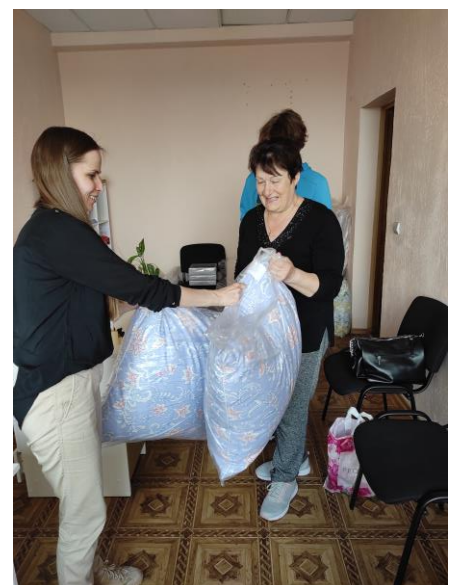
SHELTER AND BASIC NEEDS

Achievements and Impact

Since the closure of the TAFs, refugees from Ukraine arriving in Belarus need to self-accommodate with relatives or friends or to seek other accommodation. BRCS and the regional authorities are supporting refugees in identifying opportunities for accommodation, some of them linked to employment opportunities. Gomel and Brest Oblasts are the primary regions to accommodate refugees from Ukraine.

UNHCR is supporting refugees from Ukraine to self-accommodate in the host communities through providing them with needed textile products. UNHCR has purchased in Gomel region 185 items (50 blankets, 50 sets of bed linen, 85 pillows) and has started distributing these to 61 individuals (14, women, 10 men, 16 children, 21 elderly persons). More items are being purchased as the needs are identified.

IOM is providing direct assistance to refugees from Ukraine and third country nationals not in need for international protection who approach IOM's office in Minsk and IOM's project site in Gomel. The needs of those approaching IOM are being assessed. Since the closure of the TAFs, 600 individuals in need for assistance have approached IOM. As of the end of June, 274 refugees from Ukraine were assisted directly with hygiene items, and non-food items. Clothes and shoes for the total amount of around USD 11,000 were donated by IOM to the Gomel branch of BRCS for further distribution



among refugees from Ukraine. One kitchen set was procured and handed over to one family in Gomel region.

Inter-agency partners have re-channeled funds and assistance that had previously been allocated or purchased for the EU-Belarus mixed movement situation in Grodno region. UNICEF has reallocated USD 70,000 to the Ukraine refugee situation to procure clothes, shoes, toys, games, stationery, and hygienic items for children and an additional USD 30,000 have been made available for families. UNHCR has re-channeled 8,000 thermal blankets and 2,000 mattresses to the Ukraine refugee situation. More than 280 blankets have been distributed to refugees from Ukraine at border crossing points during the registration process and to TAFs as needed. UNICEF procured locally 3,600 hygiene kits for approximately 6,600 individuals. As of the end of June, 794 individuals have received the kits. IOM re-channeled to refugees from Ukraine in all regions of Belarus 7,800 hygiene kits that had been purchased previously by BRCS. The kits are being distributed in all the regions of the country. In June 2022, IOM started to provide assistance with accommodation and three persons were already assisted with sheltering.

Last year, UNHCR supported the renovation of the BRCS crisis center in Gomel with USD 25,000. The crisis center provides temporary accommodation to families in need, particularly women at risk or survivors of violence. Since the beginning of the Ukraine emergency, the crisis room is increasingly needed. UNHCR is investing another USD 10,500 for further expansion and winterization.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

Due to decreasing numbers of arrivals and the sanatoria being booked for commercial purposes, the TAFs have been fully vacated. Other options must be sought in collaboration with the local authorities and BRCS. The programmes by partners are being adapted accordingly. The dormitory in Brest region and the regular TAFs that host asylum-seekers in Gomel and Vitebsk regions continue to temporarily host a small number of refugees from Ukraine.

Some refugees who are relocating to private accommodation in the host communities have expressed their need for basic needs items including blankets, pillows, linen, towels, kitchen items, cleaning material, furniture, large household appliances, stationery for school children, clothes, shoes, and medicines. Inter-agency partners are addressing these needs through providing basic needs items and cash assistance to vulnerable populations.

Inter-agency partners face issues with the local market and local procurement due to sanctions that have been applied to Belarus as well as limited local production capacity.



COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND SELF RELIANCE

Achievements and Impact

The Government published employment opportunities at the TAFs while these were operational. Most employment opportunities are available in rural locations and collective farms. By the end of June, 39 persons have already benefitted from employment facilitation and legal aid services provided by IOM: 22 state fees for employment permits were paid; 10 persons received employment related assistance and

legal aid (payment for services); and 7 persons were assisted through IOM sponsorship for vocational training.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

Partners will need to ensure that individuals have access to accurate and timely information to make informed choices. Inter-agency partners are planning a mapping of service providers and referral pathways. Channels of preferred and trusted communication to engage with partners should be established. Communities should have opportunities to be engaged in programme design, implementation and monitoring – so that communities' voices drive decision-making.

UNDP is working to strengthen BRCS' capacity to deliver crisis response through engaging UN Volunteers (UNVs). UNVs will assist with information management and conducting a continuous needs and capacity assessment of refugees and local communities to inform comprehensive activities for refugees' socio-economic integration. The assessment will use human-centered design and continuously engage key stakeholders to inform the development of context-driven solutions. Local communities, vulnerable populations and gender dimension will be an integral part of the assessment.



LOGISTICS, SUPPLY AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Achievements and Impact

UNHCR has allocated to BRCS USD 10,000 for transporting new arrivals from border crossing points to temporary accommodations. IOM also started assisting with transportation for Ukrainian arrivals. As of 30 June, 10 beneficiaries were assisted with transportation by IOM.

UNHCR has rented a warehouse in Gomel region to store stocks of non-food items (NFIs) to be able to provide humanitarian assistance quickly.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

Additional warehouse space needed to be made available. The capacity of the BRCS was just 70m2 of space, which was not sufficient to accommodate all incoming supplies.

Working in partnership

The Government of Belarus leads the response to the Ukraine refugee situation engaging the BRCS as a main channel of international aid delivery and distribution. UNHCR is leading the inter-agency **Refugee Coordination Forum (RCF)** that has been established at country level to complement the efforts of the Government of Belarus. RCF partners include the MOI's Department of Citizenship and Migration (DCM), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), IOM, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, WHO, IFRC, BRCS, and the Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO) in an observing role. The RCF can expand to include other actors as required and agreed. Regional local authorities as well as regional service providers are among other important counterparts that the RCF works with in close liaison. The work of the RCF is supported by an operational Working Group and a Working Group on data collection.

UNHCR leads and coordinates the implementation of the **regional Refugee Response Plan (RRP) for the Ukraine situation** in line with the **Refugee Coordination Model (RCM)** and in close collaboration and consultation with relevant Government counterparts, and with the support of inter-agency partners and other stakeholders. The RRP was officially launched on 27 April. Belarus is reflected under the “Other Countries” chapter. The six RRP partners in Belarus have developed a summary document to outline the multi-partner, multi-sector response strategy and financial requirements in Belarus.

IOM | UNDP | UNFPA | UNHCR | UNICEF | WHO

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LINKS

[Regional data portal – Ukraine Situation RRP – Belarus RRP Summary Document – Refugee Funding Tracker](#)