



Belarus

31 October 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.

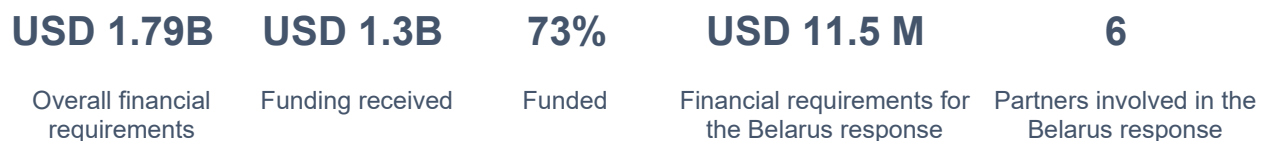
Since mid-April 2022, border crossings of refugees from Ukraine remain very limited. Most transit through Poland, Lithuania, and Latvia. An unknown number continue to arrive via Russia. Most are hosted in Belarus by relatives or friends or rent property. Others are supported by local authorities and partners to identify accommodation and employment opportunities.

The Government leads the response to the Ukraine refugee situation in Belarus, with the Belarus Red Cross (BRC) 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 28 October) *



RECALIBRATED 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

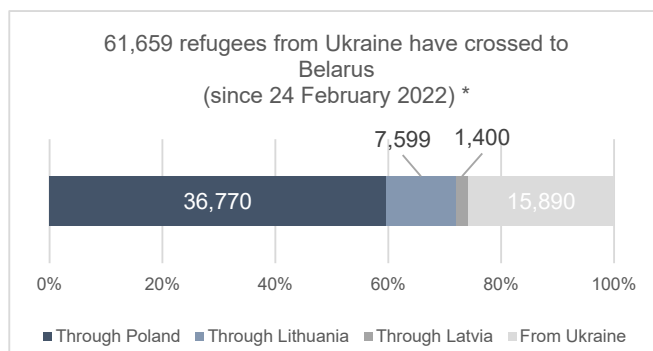
This report was produced by UNHCR in collaboration with inter-agency partners.

pendular and transit movements. The age and gender breakdown are estimates based on Protection Profiling exercise conducted by the BRC between July and end-September 2022 (sample size: 1,409 individuals).

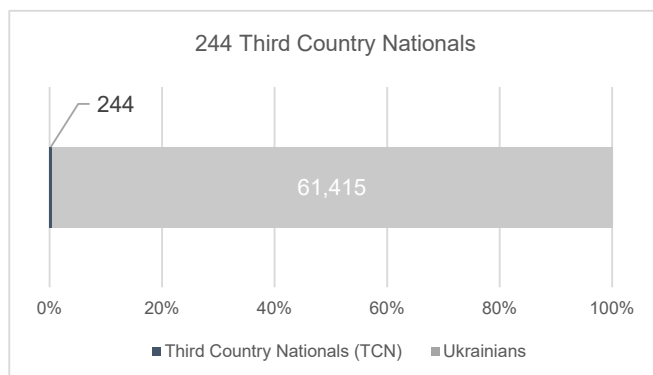
**See the [Ukraine Situation Regional Refugee Response Plan, RRP Recalibration as of September 2020](#) and the [Belarus Summary Document](#) for a breakdown of sectoral response priorities and requirements. See the [Refugee Funding Tracker](#) for RRP funding information.

Operational Context

A total of 61,659 refugees from Ukraine have crossed the border to Belarus from 24 February to 28 October. 244 persons are third country nationals. Valid ID documents or international passports are not required for persons seeking protection in Belarus. 45,769 people were recorded as transiting through EU countries before entering Belarus, while 15,932 instances have crossed directly from Ukraine. Due to the absence of border controls, there is no record of the number of Ukrainians that transited through Russia.



As of 25 October, the estimated number of citizens of Ukraine remaining in Belarus amounts to 16,195 persons¹. 9,009 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. 1,980 Ukrainians have applied for asylum in Belarus. As of 30 September, 1,011 Ukrainians have been granted complementary protection. As of 25 October, 3,590 have applied for 1-year temporary residence permits. 1,616 have applied for permanent residence permits.



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



¹ Cumulative figures including the # of (1) asylums-seekers, (2) people registered by the MOI, individuals who applied for (3) permanent residence (PPR) and (4) temporary residence (PTR).

elderly people²; women at risk; female-headed households; children, especially unaccompanied and separated children (UASC); people with disabilities. The number of people fleeing from Ukraine to Belarus is relatively small compared to neighbouring countries. More recently, as weather conditions get colder and due to high energy costs in the neighbouring countries, reports partners and monitoring visits showed increased flow of refugees in Belarus. The Government and inter-agency partners recognize this fact and continue to prepare 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 SBC as of 28 October 2022. The figures may include pendular and transit movements.

** The statistics for the number of registered Ukrainians were provided by MOI's DCM as of 25 October 2022, and on the number of border crossings by SBC as of 28 October 2022.

*** The statistics are based on data provided by MOI's DCM as of 25 October 2022.

² In comparison to other countries in the region hosting Ukrainians Belarus hosts a proportionately larger number of elderly people.

**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. During August - October 629 persons (360 cases) have been counselled by the RCS at their offices and through phone calls, reaching a total of 2,240 persons (1,197 cases) from the beginning of March. In addition, UNHCR has counselled 113 refugees from Ukraine through its hotline and counselling sessions at its office in Minsk.

In collaboration with BRC, two **information points** were established by UNICEF at the Polish – Belarusian border crossing point, “Warszawski bridge”, and at Brest city central bus terminal. Both points are supplied with child-friendly spaces, information leaflets on various topics (e.g., registration in Belarus, medical and social care, employment, education), hygiene kits, and water. More than 870 individuals (398 children) received critical information and referred to the relevant services.

12 child-friendly spaces were established by UNICEF in collaboration with BRC and Social Pedagogical Centres in Brest and Homiel regions where 289 children (148 girls) benefitted from intersectoral programming and safeguarding interventions.

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. Nine individuals have been assisted in returning to their country of origin including people from Tajikistan, people with dual nationality (Ukrainian-Russian, and others).

UNICEF has signed a case management partnership agreement with a Homiel-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 end of September, 334 children (177 girls and 158 boys) have benefitted from case management in Homiel 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 supports functioning of two Orange Safe Spaces in Homiel and Brest where UNFPA and partners provide psychosocial counselling, referral and information services including older women and women living with disabilities. During August-October, 766 women were consulted in the spaces (404 in Homiel and 362 in Brest).



Picture 1 Self-support group meeting in UNFPA Orange Safe Space in Brest, July 2022, photo © UNFPA

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 assigned one-time cash assistance to 674 individuals (170 women, 108 men, 72 girls, 96 boys, 130 elderly women, 52 elderly men). As of 31 October, 235 have received their cash assistance through BRC. 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.

During July to September UNHCR with partner BRC conducted **Protection Monitoring and Profiling** of refugees from Ukraine in Belarus. Sample size of the survey is 1,409 respondents and it covers 2,966 persons. The results of the survey have been disseminated and published and are contributing to planning. The Fact Sheet can be found at: <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/96698>



Picture 2 Participants of the training on mobile data collection through KoboCollect and Bitrix 24 in Gomel, 13.10.2022, photo © RC Gomel

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

UNICEF have signed agreement with BRC and Belarus post office to assist more than 600 vulnerable refugee families with children with cash support to prepare for winter. Governmental social entitlement scheme was used to estimate the total cash support per beneficiary and will be delivered to more than 2,300 individuals, including 1,300 children.

Additional multi-purpose cash assistance and other goods such as winter clothing, hygiene kits and others are being provided by IOM, UNICEF, UNFPA and UNHCR as part of an inter-agency winter response.



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.

UNICEF and UNHCR have jointly distributed vouchers to purchase school supplies and uniforms for children from Ukraine to enter the school year in Belarus. UNICEF has distributed vouchers to 648 children (322 girls) in all regions and continue distribution as needs identified. UNHCR has distributed 444 out of 510 vouchers to 92 children; distribution in Homiel, Viciebsk, Mahiliou and Minsk completed, in Brest and Hrodna is in process. IOM provided direct assistance to 55 children with the stationery kits or the school.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

Outreach continues in collaboration with the BRC to identify refugee children and support them with essential supplies and uniforms. 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, the BRC 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 Homiel and Brest regions.



Picture 2 Distribution of vouchers for school supplies and uniforms in Minsk, 20.10.2022, photo © UNHCR



HEALTH AND NUTRITION

Achievements and Impact

On 14 September 2022, the President of Belarus signed an amendment to the Decree No. 420 of 30 August 2014 (issued on 16.09.22) "On the stay of citizens of Ukraine in the Republic of Belarus". This amendment provides the legislative basis for affordable medical care on an equal basis with citizens of the Republic of Belarus. This amendment applies only to those of citizens from Ukraine who arrived in Belarus after February 24 and have not yet applied for residence permit. IOM established referral pathways for refugees from Ukraine with serious medical conditions to the medical institutions in all the regions for further **medical examination and treatment** and covers related costs. 23 beneficiaries were referred to the medical institutions for further assistance. Another 40 persons benefitted from other types of medical support (e.g., payment for medicines, PCR tests). In addition, IOM continued its voucher program to support with the medications. The program is implemented in Homiel, Mahiliou, and Viciebsk regions. As of end October 2022, 316 beneficiaries were provided with the vouchers.

UNFPA established a referral procedure for sexual and reproductive health services (SRH) to healthcare facilities in Minsk and Homiel 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 two Ukrainian women staying in Belarus. Though new legislation allows access to health care services for Ukrainians, UNFPA stands ready to cover costs of SRH services for Ukrainian women.

A key response priority is **psycho-social support (PSS)** particularly for children and their caregivers, women, elderly people, and persons with disabilities, who might have experienced stress and anxiety including those who witnessed violence. A psycho-social mobile team was started by UNICEF. Until the end of October, 1,850 people, including 1,180 children (592 boys and 588 girls) benefitted from PSS activities.

UNICEF has partnered with Belarus Association of UNESCO Clubs to improve the skills of service providers and specialists for improving the access of socially vulnerable groups of children and adolescents, including refugees, to health care and social protection services, leisure activities, including those aimed at developing universal competencies that contribute to personal development. This partnership will reach out to more than 1500 individuals including 500 adolescents and youth contributing to social integration in addition to services listed above.

12 specialists and volunteers of Red Cross were trained by UNICEF on psychosocial support to refugee children.

IOM has hired one psychologist to receive referrals from psycho-social services and provide follow-up **mental health consultations** to those in need. 96 refugees and migrants have so far received psycho-social support, and psychological consultations were provided to 45 people.

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, are required to pay for most medical services that go beyond emergency medical treatment. Such individual cases need **financial support or medical services provided free of charge**, particularly the most vulnerable.

Refugees from Ukraine must pay for certain medical procedures on the same basis that citizens of Belarus. Targeted assistance for pharmaceuticals and certain medical procedures will be required.

As per the needs assessed, many refugees arriving from Ukraine need **mental health services** that go beyond psycho-social 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

Since the beginning of response, IOM assisted 999 affected people with food kits. IOM re-channelled for distribution in all regions of Belarus 12,400 food kits that had been purchased previously by the BRC.

During the period July to October, UNHCR with partner BRC assisted 805 persons by providing food kits.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

In-kind assistance, including food packages, is in need.



SHELTER AND BASIC NEEDS**Achievements and Impact**

Since the closure of the TAFs, refugees from Ukraine arriving in Belarus self-accommodate with relatives or friends or self-rent other accommodation. The BRC and the regional authorities are supporting refugees in identifying opportunities for accommodation, some of them linked to employment opportunities.

UNHCR is supporting refugees from Ukraine to self-accommodate in the host communities through providing them with household items. As of 12 October, 48 families (88 persons) received certificates, over 100 families will receive them in the upcoming weeks. In addition, UNHCR provides textile products in Homiel region. During the August to October period, 140 people received assistance reaching a total of 235 individuals (75 women, 51 men, 35 girls, 41 boys, 40 elderly women, 12 elderly men). 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 sites in Homiel, Brest, Viciebsk and Mahiliou regions. The needs of those approaching IOM are assessed based on a vulnerability criteria. Since the closure of the TAFs, 1,416 individuals in need for assistance have approached IOM. As of the end of October, 1402 refugees from Ukraine were assisted by all types of assistance providing by IOM, including among others hygiene items and NFIs. IOM commenced distribution of winter clothes and blankets. As of end October 2022, 140 affected people were assisted with winterization items.

UNICEF locally procured 3,600 hygiene kits for approximately 6,600 individuals. As of the end of July, 1,600 individuals, including 961 children (493 girls and 468 boys) have received the kits. 7,800 hygiene kits that had been purchased previously by BRC were re-channeled for refugees from Ukraine by IOM. The kits are being distributed in all regions of the country.

Since June 2022, IOM assisted 31 people with accommodation.

In 2021-2022 UNHCR provided over USD 35,000 to support the renovation of the Homiel crisis room, which was officially opened in October 2022. The crisis room provides temporary accommodation to people in need, including the most vulnerable categories of refugees and asylum-seekers.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

Inter-agency partners are responding to the winterization needs with warm clothing and shoes, as well as hygiene kits. Further needs are being assessed with an increasing number of requests for warm clothes and shoes in all regions of the country.

Some refugees who relocate to private accommodation have expressed their need for basic items such as blankets, pillows, linen, towels, kitchen items, cleaning material, furniture, large household appliances, stationery for school children, clothes, shoes, and medicines. Inter-agency partners are assessing the needs and address these through providing basic needs items and cash assistance to vulnerable populations. It is expected that needs will increase with the onset of the coldest months of December and January in Belarus.

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



COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND SELF RELIANCE**Achievements and Impact**

By the end of October, 130 people have benefitted from employment facilitation and legal aid services provided by IOM: 27 state fees for employment permits were paid; 90 people received employment related assistance and legal aid (payment for services); and 231 persons were assisted through IOM support to the vocational training.

UNDP Accelerator Lab partners with the BRC to develop a digital platform that will better connect refugees with support services and opportunities available for them across Belarus. The BRC works with UNDP to map existing services and opportunities on legal counselling, work, housing, education, humanitarian aid (clothing, hygiene, food, etc.), search for relatives, psychosocial support and psychological assistance, health. The platform will also be used by BRC volunteers as a tool to support counselling of refugees. 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. The launch of the platform is planned for November 2022.

In addition, UNDP has completed a one joint information leaflet to cater to non-digital users. A specific leaflet for each region is being produced which will also include general country-wide information. The purpose of the joint leaflet is to ensure clear referral pathways by referring refugees from Ukraine to available services so that they can receive information in person or over the phone.

With support and collaboration with partners, UNICEF has reached more than 8,400 individuals with information on available services through social media, website, traditional media, messengers and face-to-face interactions. More than 2,300 individuals were engaged through social media, educational activities focused on behavior change, dialogue and discussions on services improvements. A dedicated page for Ukrainians in Belarus was publicly launched on the UNICEF [website](#).

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

Inter-agency 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.

**LOGISTICS, SUPPLY AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS****Achievements and Impact**

IOM started assisting with transportation for arrivals from Ukraine. As of the end of October, 52 beneficiaries were assisted with transportation by IOM.

UNHCR continues to rent a warehouse in Homiel region to store stocks of non-food items (NFIs) including prepositioning winter items to provide humanitarian assistance quickly.

UNHCR with UNICEF with partner BRC is supporting transport costs for the most vulnerable individuals to reach distribution locations for cash or in-kind assistance.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

Working in partnership

The Government of Belarus leads the response to the Ukraine refugee situation engaging the BRC as the main channel of international aid delivery and distribution. UNHCR is leading the inter-agency **Refugee Coordination Forum (RCF)** in line with the Regional Refugee Coordination Model (RCM) 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, BRC, 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, as well as specific short-term working groups established to respond to the changing context.

UNHCR coordinates the implementation of the **regional Refugee Response Plan (RRP) for the Ukraine situation** in close collaboration and consultation with relevant Government counterparts, and with inter-agency partners and other stakeholders. The RRP was launched in April and recalibrated in October 2022 to ensure that the coordinated response is positioned to address the needs of refugees prior to the onset of winter, given anticipated needs. 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. The summary can be accessed at: <https://cutt.ly/FNm8qSv>

IOM | UNDP | UNFPA | UNHCR | UNICEF | WHO

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LINKS

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