

# Poland

01 August 2023

**970,959, refugees** from Ukraine held active **PESEL** registration as of **01 August 2023**. The cumulative number for PESEL applications since March 2022 stood at almost **1.7 million**.

UNHCR coordinates the response of **83 organizations** in Poland under the Regional Refugee Response Plan. More than half of them are Polish civil society organizations.

UNHCR is supporting government-led efforts through a multisectoral response focusing on **ensuring access to asylum and protection, assisting the most vulnerable refugees, and facilitating socio-economic inclusion**.

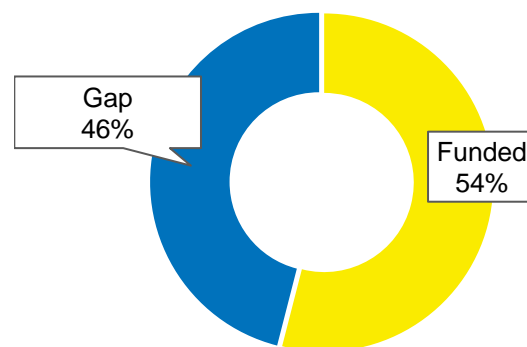
## KEY FIGURES

- **45,452** refugees received protection support and information (at **4 UNHCR-UNICEF Blue Dots**, **7 UNHCR Community Centers** and through mobile outreach activities) in 2023.
- **18,972** vulnerable refugees received targeted cash assistance in 2023.
- **18,245** protection monitoring and profiling interviews were conducted in 2023.
- **149,367** core relief items (CRIs) were delivered in 2023.

## FUNDING (AS OF 20 JULY 2023)

**US\$ 102.9 M**

requested for the Ukraine Emergency Situation for Poland



## STAFFING & OFFICES

**126** international and national staff

**5** offices (2 in Warsaw, 1 Krakow, 1 Rzeszow and 1 Lublin).

## Overview

Since 2022, due to the war in Ukraine, Poland has transformed from a country hosting relatively few refugees into one of the world's main refugee-hosting countries.

Refugee arrivals reduced in 2023 but were expected to continue as the situation in Ukraine remains volatile, with widespread displacement and destruction. Some refugees have moved on in Europe and elsewhere, but large numbers of refugees from Ukraine remain in Poland. UNHCR has strategically positioned itself, boosting its presence and response to meet humanitarian needs on the ground, while also leading the coordination of national and international partners within the Regional Refugee Response Plan framework, in line with the Government-led efforts.



Polish lesson for refugees at the Protection Hub in Rzeszów.  
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## Main Activities



### Coordination: Working Together

UNHCR is playing a central role in shaping a comprehensive and coordinated response by closely collaborating with the Government, local authorities, national and international NGOs, grassroots organisations, and United Nations sister agencies. Using the Refugee Coordination Model, UNHCR leads the coordination efforts of 83 partners (63% are national and local organisations) to implement the **2023 Ukraine Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRP)**, which seeks to secure **\$709.4 M** through five sectors (Protection, Health, Education, Economic Inclusion, Shelter/Housing/Accommodation) and four main working groups (Information Management, Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)/Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP), Basic Needs and Cash Based intervention). Regular coordination meetings are organised by UNHCR and partners at central and regional levels and within the framework of the RRP, including in the Masovian, Malopolska, Podkarpackie, and Lubelskie Voivodeships (administrative regions).



### Protection and Access to Territory: Ensuring equal rights and opportunities

UNHCR is at the forefront of advocating for refugees' rights, striving for equal access to asylum procedures and inclusion in Poland's national social protection system. UNHCR's advocacy work is key in ensuring that the protection and rights of refugees are upheld, and their specific needs are addressed. Key protection activities include:

- **Legal counselling and assistance** are provided to refugees through a network of legal partners in major cities to assist with access to protection, access to employment and social integration, social and financial benefits, residency and documentation and legalisation of stay, among others. As of 01 August, **15,834 refugees and asylum seekers** received legal aid in 2023.
- **Mental health and psycho-social support (MHPSS)** is provided in group or individual activities, including counselling, recreational activities, and referrals to specialised services. As of 01 August, some **3,546 refugees** benefited from MHPSS services.
- **Child Protection activities** are provided through child-friendly spaces, Blue Dot Hubs, and Community Centres, and include psycho-social support, specialised services for children at risk and those with specific needs and advocacy efforts for children's rights. As of 01 August, some **8,182 refugee children** benefited from child protection services.
- **Protection monitoring and profiling** enhance protection interventions by documenting needs, intentions, and protection considerations. It also strengthens the active identification of persons with specific needs and facilitates timely interventions. This is done through a network of over 40 protection monitors based in Poland's main cities. As of 01 August, UNHCR and partners conducted **18,245** protection monitoring and profiling interviews in 13 Voivodeships (Dolnoslaskie, Wielkopolskie, Malopolskie, Lubelskie, Mazowieckie, Podkarpackie, Pomorskie, Podlaskie, Opolskie, Lubuskie, Lodzkie, Slaskie and Zachodniopomorskie).
- **Access to Territory:** UNHCR carries out **missions to border crossing points** along Poland's borders with Ukraine and Belarus. UNHCR meets with Border Guards and discusses issues related to access to territory, asylum procedures and documentation.
- **Community-based protection activities** are mainly provided through **four Blue Dot Hubs and seven UNHCR Community Centres**, located in key refugee-hosting areas. They serve as one-stop shops, providing a variety of protection activities while enhancing community participation. They are also a space for community-driven initiatives, with a focus on activities promoting social cohesion. In addition, there are **several mobile outreach teams** (connected to the community centres and UNHCR Field and Sub Offices) to reach refugees with specific needs and in remote areas. As of 01 August 2023, **45,452 refugees** benefitted from protection services offered at the Blue Dots and Community Centres.
- **Access to accurate and timely information:** UNHCR actively addresses critical information gaps, ensuring refugees know their rights and duties and can access essential services. This is achieved through various platforms, including the UNHCR HELP website (available in English, Polish and Ukrainian and received **326,885 page views and 195,977 visits as of 01 August**), leaflets, posters, and social media platforms (**Facebook** and **Twitter**). The Regional Contact Centre (RCC) enhances communication with communities, providing a direct line for refugees to obtain information and

access specialised services through a referral system. The RCC is a toll-free mechanism (800 012 948) and allows to report cases of misconduct and fraud. As of **01 August, 31,747** calls were received.

- **Cash Assistance** is one of the most efficient and effective ways to support people forced to flee, allowing them to decide on what they need most to support their families' basic needs. As of 01 August, **18,972** vulnerable refugees have received cash assistance under the highly targeted UNHCR cash programme since the beginning of the year. In 2022, some 290,000 refugees were supported with cash assistance.
- **Emergency supplies & Core Relief Items:** UNHCR supports the Government of Poland and local authorities with emergency supplies to meet immediate needs and strengthen the reception capacities and preparedness. As of 01 August and since the beginning of the year, **149,367** essential and core relief items such as face masks, clothes, mattresses, bed linen, blankets, hygiene kits and towels have been distributed or provided to regional and local authorities and partners.



#### **Economic Inclusion: Providing access to opportunities and promoting self-reliance.**

UNHCR supports government and other initiatives to enhance refugees' access to employment. In addition to coordinating inclusion activities and linking different initiatives, UNHCR connects refugees to potential employers, **supporting their journey towards economic stability and self-reliance**. In 2023, UNHCR participated in and supported organising job fairs in seven voivodeships. These job fairs were attended by **more than 9,400 job seekers, both refugees and host community members**.

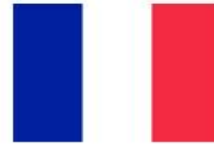


#### **Partnerships: Ensuring sustainability of humanitarian action.**

UNHCR Poland is committed to supporting and empowering local and grassroots organisations, with the aim of ensuring the continuity and sustainability of humanitarian assistance. These entities work alongside international partners and engage in providing much needed assistance to vulnerable refugees. **UNHCR engages in strategic partnerships, working with seven Polish partners** (CPK, Polish Red Cross, Caritas, SIP, Halina Niec, FDDS and Habitat for Humanity) **and two international partners** (DRC and CORE). Each of them contributes with unique capabilities and resources, to respond to the most pressing needs of refugees in Poland. In addition, UNHCR supports 23 Polish organisations through its partnerships with DRC, SIP and FDDS. Furthermore, UNHCR has signed small grant agreements to support additional 28 grassroots and refugee-led organisations. These organisations play a significant role in providing aid, such as legal assistance, education, healthcare, and child protection, directly to refugees, through engaging in community-based protection activities.

## Donors

UNHCR is grateful for the critical support provided by donors who have contributed to this operation in 2023 as well as those who have contributed to UNHCR programmes with broadly earmarked and unearmarked funds.



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