



Regional Refugee Response
for the Ukraine Situation



Basic Needs Working Group Meeting – 1st of April 2024

Meeting Details

Date	01. 04. 2024
Time	15.00 pm
Chair and Co-chair	Andrea Cuisana, UNHCR – Almothana Hasan, ACTED
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Agenda

1. RACs Update
2. Protection monitoring in Privately managed accommodation centers
3. Winter NFIs update
4. Update from partners

Information collection and relevant links

To visualise the dashboard please access it through the link:

<https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrIjoiaNWYxYTlmZGMtNTY2Mi00NDNmLTg2OTctYzY3MTQ1MjVjMzZlZiwiZCI6ImU1YzM3OTgxLTY2NjQtNDEzNC04YTBlTY1NDNkMmFmODBiZSIsImMiOjh9>

Participants



Regional Refugee Response
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<i>Andrea Cuisana, UNHCR</i>	<i>Svetlana Cires, CRS</i>	<i>Michel Gerges, WVI</i>
<i>Emmanuel Otika, UNHCR</i>	<i>Zoe Kostitsi Papastathopoulou, DRC</i>	<i>Grigore Guzun, WFP</i>
<i>Athina Nalmpanti, ACTED</i>	<i>Cristina Berdos, CRS</i>	<i>Sara Sivkova, UNHCR</i>
<i>Natalia Stelea, UNHCR</i>	<i>Constanța Craveț, A.O. „CONCORDIA</i>	<i>Eugen Cutia, DRC</i>
<i>Mihai Rotaru, MLSP</i>	<i>Valentina Ghenciu, Lumus Moldova</i>	<i>Aveen Jalal, NRC</i>
<i>Almothana Hasan, ACTED</i>	<i>Serghei Munteanu, ACTED</i>	<i>Chelsey Carr, CWS</i>
<i>Sean Segar, UNHCR</i>	<i>Veronika Kovalchuk, CWS</i>	<i>Viorica Bulat, World Vision</i>
<i>Popescu Eugen, UNHCR</i>	<i>Corina Andronic, UNICEF</i>	<i>Pietro Steffani, IFRIC</i>
<i>Hanna Ursol, PIN</i>		

Summary of discussions and agreements/ action points

Agenda	Discussion	Agreements/ Actions
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<p>1. Agenda point RACs Update</p>	<p>The chairperson welcomed participants, thanked them for their presence, and briefly presented the agenda.</p> <p>If any modifications are necessary to the minutes of the BNWG, please contact: stelea@unhcr.org</p> <p>The chairperson proceeded with the meeting.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ungheni RAC, UID 67 officially closed on the 15th of March. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11 HH/38 individuals relocated to private accommodations through the rental assistance program. • 8 HH/27 individuals have been moved to another RAC. • 2 HH/8 individuals have left the country, one relocated to Germany. • 1 HH/1 individual has been temporarily placed at RAC UID 150 in Ungheni, applied for rental assistance program. • 1 HH/1 PwD, bedridden person has been relocated to Valea Rediului RAC. 2. Cahul RAC, UID 142 officially closed on the 25th of March. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 HH/20 individuals relocated to private accommodations through the rental assistance program. • 1 HH/3 individuals, relocated to live with a host family. 3. Carpineni RAC 42, officially closed on the 15th of March. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 HH/ 5 individuals relocated to private accommodations through the rental assistance program. • 3 HH/5 individuals were relocated to other RAC. • 1 HH/3 individuals returned to Ukraine. • 2 HH /2 individuals relocated to host families. 4. Balti RAC, UID 43 closure scheduled for 17th March. Total refugees residing in the RAC: 49 HH/102 refugees. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 31 HH 69 individuals plan to relocate to private accommodations through rental assistance program. • 14 households comprising 20 individuals with specific needs (Persons with Disabilities, Older persons, Health Needs) plan to relocate to another RAC. • 1 HH/3 individuals returned to Ukraine. • 2 HH/ 6 individuals have moved to Norway. • 1 HH/1 individual left the RAC with an unknown destination. • 2 HH/4 individuals have relocated to private accommodations via rental assistance. 	
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	<p>Future Relocation Intentions: 1 HH/2 individuals intend to stay with relatives.</p> <p>Legal Assistance: 1 individual without TP was referred to the CDA for legal counselling.</p> <p>MLSP: In Balti, in close coordination with the RCM, all requests for relocation were presented to the refugees. A few households formally refused relocation to other RACs in writing, while others remain undecided. Refugees requiring medical assistance have been accommodated at the Valea Rediului and Telenesti RACs. Here there are provided with medical services. If refugees refuse the relocation, other options will not be provided.</p> <p>Last week, during the RCM's counselling sessions with refugees, the Ombudsman visited the center and declared it illegal to not provide additional relocation options for the refugees. They recommended that the center remain open. This message has caused confusion, giving the refugees false hope and is slowing down the closure process. A representative from the MLSP also visited the center, informing the refugees that the decision to close the center stands. The closure directive did not originate directly from the ministry; rather, it was the founder who requested the cessation of the center's activities. All relocation options provided to the refugee have been aligned with the request.</p> <p>CRS: This week, a visit to Balti is planned. In coordination with ACTED, the rental assistance partner designated for this center, the registration of refugees who were not previously selected due to eligibility criteria will be conducted.</p> <p>UNHCR: The Ombudsman, visiting the RACs, stating there is no authority to close them. It is important to verify whether the MLSP discussed with the Ombudsman how information should be communicated during these visits to avoid confusion among refugees. Understanding whether future visits will be conducted jointly with the ministry and the Ombudsman office.</p> <p>MLSP: A meeting with the Ombudsman and MLSP will be conducted to discuss and align on the information provided to refugees. This aims to avoid further confusion, will be discussed about the regulations, eligible criteria and what are the next steps in this process.</p> <p>The second RAC in Ungheni, UID 150 may close soon, although the exact timing is uncertain. Should a decision be made, an RCM will be designated, and all refugees will receive rental assistance services. CRS has already informed the refugees about the program.</p>	
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	<p>UNHCR: The ministry provided the list of RACs from Group D. Some RACs were requested to close by the ministry, while others were requested by the managers. About 180 refugees are living in all 5 RACs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chisinau: two RACs UID 1091 and UID 573. • Cimislia: UID 145 • Costesti, Ungheni: UID 237 • Greblesti, Straseni: UID 153 <p>MFT visits will begin once the RCM is identified. The planned closure of these five RACs is estimated for the end of May. MLSP will issue the notification letters, and CRS, the main rental assistance partner, will provide support for these centers. MLSP: in Greblesti, out of 24 refugees, only 8 remain at the center, and relocation to other RAC will be provided for them considering their vulnerabilities. Relocation in Costesti may be more challenging due to family sizes.</p> <p>UNHCR: with the RESTART reform, the social assistance will take a more active role in counseling particularly in providing individual counseling and identifying families eligible for relocation to other RACs based on vulnerability criteria defined by Moldovan social assistance legislation. This effort will be coordinated jointly with the RCMs. If RCMs is unavailable, social assistance will continue counseling, given their frequent visits to the RACs. Further updates will be provided at the next RTG meeting.</p> <p>UNHCR: There was a measles outbreak reported in Tetemiteanu 6.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are 13 confirmed and 4 suspected cases. • All affected individuals were hospitalized; 10 have since been discharged and have returned to the RAC. • The most recent case was reported on March 19th. Following health authority guidelines, a 21-day quarantine period is required. • Currently, the outbreak is contained according to health authorities. The WHO is preparing informational materials for distribution not only to this RAC but to all RACs. <p>The service providers and activities that were in their RAC are suspended at the moment. If partners opt to continue services during the outbreak, they should be aware of the risks involved, even for vaccinated individuals.</p> <p>In response to the situation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNFPA - provided Dignity kits. • Ave Copiii - supported with diapers. • Intersos is assisting with medication for some of the families. 	
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	<p>Once the quarantine period for the measles outbreak ends, a vaccination campaign within the RAC will be initiated.</p> <p>Regulations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The regulation was shared with managers at the beginning of the year. • Not new regulations, but updates to the previous ones. • Now required to be disseminated to the refugees in Russian. <p>Registration and Compliance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All families are required to re-register in the RAC. • Initiates an accommodation period of 90 days, creating concern among families. <p>After discussion with MLSP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirmed enforcement of the 90-day period. • Vulnerability assessments will be conducted for potential extensions. • Assurance that no family will be left without accommodation, even if the stay can't be extended. • Details about post-90-day processes remain unclear. <p>MLSP: the situation is very simple. The refugees can stay in the RACs for 90 days, after this period, only the most vulnerable families will remain in the RACs. The managers are explaining to the beneficiaries who is not eligible to stay in the RAC, they can apply to the rental assistance program. A meeting with all managers is planned for the 2nd of April to discuss and explain the regulations, to answer to all their questions, and how they can implement the regulation.</p> <p>CRS: visited the two RACs in Hincesti, Carpineni and Sarata Galbena. A few families have to exit the center in the next 90 days, all of them are reluctant to leave the center. The rental assistance program was presented the residents.</p> <p>From BNWG and PWG, plans are in place to start visiting all RACs to monitor how information about regulations and the 90 days period is communicated to refugees, to support MLSP regarding communication strategies to ensure that information is conveyed effectively and clearly, to prevent situations where refugees feel overwhelmed by sudden or confusing messages about regulations and requirements.</p> <p>UNHCR: a site management dashboard was developed, to provide comprehensive insights to the BNWG and other sectors. The dashboard is designed to provide: a clear overview of the population at the RACs, RAC ID, address, location, and population groups. This ensures all partners have the necessary information readily available for effective coordination and support.</p> <p>The dashboard will be updated in a bi-weekly and monthly basis.</p>	
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<p>2. Agenda points:</p> <p>Protection monitoring in Privately managed accommodation centers</p>	<p>To visualise the dashboard please access it through the link: https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrIjoibWYxYTIwZGMtNTY2Mi00NDBmLTg2OTctYzY3MTQ1MjVjMzliwidCI6ImU1YzY3OTgxLTY2NjQ0NDZlNC04YTBjLTY1NDNkMmFmODBiZSIsImMiOjh9</p> <p>The MLSP announced about UAhelp, a government-managed platform, which includes similar information like demographic and operational data on RACs. They mentioned that the link to this platform could be shared with all partners and maybe linked to the UNHCR platform.</p> <p>In September 2023, the PWG and the BNWG initiated monitoring activities in privately managed accommodation centers across Moldova, also known as informal RACs. It was a significant interest from partners and some donors to enhance engagement in these centers, where service provision is notably sparse. These centers are independently operated by NGOs, faith-based groups, are not being managed by MLSP.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. MFT visits consisting of BNWG and PWG partners. Primary locations: Chisinau, Cantimir, Anenii-Noi, Criuleni, Straseni, and Orhei. Result: 12 out of 15 centers visited / 227 individuals, with NO major protection issues identified. 2. Protection Monitoring: November 2023 - February 2024. <p>Conducted 68 household-level interviews across 8 locations out of 11 targeted. The reason for not covering all locations is due to lack of consent from the managers, closure of some RACs. <i>The small sample size of 68 households is recognized as a limitation in the data's representativeness, highlights the need for caution in drawing conclusions due to the small sample sizes and potential non-representativeness.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on household level protection monitoring. • Methodology used the UNHCR existing protection monitoring tool. • Comprehensive coverage including refugee profiles, displacement patterns, tensions, specific needs, legal status, and access to employment and healthcare. • Collaboration: CDA, PIN, Intersos, IOM, DRC, UNICEF, and WFP. <p>The summary of the HH characteristics and general demographics of persons residing in the privately managed accommodation centers:</p> <p>Nationality: 96% of residents in privately managed centers are Ukrainian nationals, similar to those in the racks. Demographic Profile: Majority of interview respondents are female, average age is 50 years old. Household Composition:</p>	
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- Single adults with dependents: 30%
- Two adults with dependents: 26% (notably higher in privately managed centers compared to racks)
- Households consisting of one older person with or without dependents.

The demographic profiles of residents in privately managed centers is similar with those in the RACs, with slight variations in household composition.

Medical Conditions and Disabilities: 53% of respondents indicated that they had at least one family member with a serious medical condition, while 15% mentioned having at least one family member with a disability, compared to 31% in RACs reporting having a family member with a serious medical condition and 12% reported having a family member with a disability.

Children Separated from Parents: There are indications of children separated from both parents, but the sample size is too small to derive meaningful data.

Documentation and Legal Status:

- Obtaining temporary protection was slightly higher in privately managed accommodation centres (87%) than in RACs (84%).
- % of those reporting not having any legal status was the same between the two groups (3%)
- No significant difference between those residing in PMAC and those in RACs with regards to family members missing documentation or having expired documents (18% and 12%).

Conclusion: Overall, the findings indicate several needs that appear to be higher for those residing in privately managed accommodation centres than RACs. These include higher rates of family members with medical conditions and disabilities, increased unemployment and urgent employment needs, and a larger percentage of children not registered for education in Moldova. *However, interpretations and conclusions drawn from comparisons between these two data sets should be made with consideration of sample size limitations.* **The presentations for more details will be attached to the MoM.**



<p>3. Agenda points:</p> <p>Winter NFIs update</p>	<p>DRC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed winter NFI distribution. • Collaborated with social assistance to avoid duplication in beneficiary lists. • Continued distribution of collective hygiene items at certain racks and border crossing points. • In the tender process for procuring 6,000 additional hygiene items. <p>NRC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing hygiene item distributions in Transnistria. • Conducted a market analysis in the north. • Plans to distribute 125 winterization and hygiene items in northern regions this coming September. <p>CWS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalized food and clothing distributions across 30 districts. • Encountered difficulties accessing beneficiary information through local authorities, which delayed their process. • Conducted post-distribution monitoring. <p>IOM: Prepared 4,000 NFIs for potential escalation scenarios.</p> <p>UNHCR:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Began distributions in February. • Distributed 18,255 items including bedding, kitchen, and hygiene supplies. • Beneficiaries included 2,320 individuals, with 70% refugees and 30% vulnerable locals • Distribution activities primarily targeted South and Central Moldova. • Collaborated with local authorities and social services to enhance coordination and avoid duplication of efforts. <p>Challenges Encountered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulties in reaching beneficiaries in remote areas. • Requests from partners for more diverse distribution items. • Communication challenges with local authorities affecting beneficiary outreach. • Issues with individuals requesting kits, though not included on the relevant beneficiary lists. <p>Beneficiary Feedback: Following focus group discussions, UNHCR noted that a common complaint among beneficiaries is insufficient information regarding distributions.</p> <p>All partners have conducted the post-distribution monitoring and are encouraged to share the reports.</p>	
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<p>Agenda point 4. Partners updates</p>	<p>Summary of Recommendations and Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winterization Planning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Emphasize the use of a common winterization planning tool, including the activity dashboard from UNHCR and the shared Excel tool. ○ Advocate for advanced planning to cope with early onset of cold seasons and avoid procurement delays. • Coordination and Communication: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continue coordination with local authorities and other humanitarian actors, incorporating beneficiaries into the planning process to ensure everyone is aligned. ○ Maintain readiness of NFIs at northern border crossing points. ○ Integrate satisfaction measures into post-distribution monitoring to enhance future planning based on actual needs and preferences. • Partners were encouraged: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To share the post-distribution monitoring findings to inform distributions planned for 2024-2025. ○ To utilize the winter activity info platform from UNHCR while it is available online. ○ Strengthen coordination with local coordination forums and local authorities to stay updated on the needs in remote areas. ○ Each organization should ensure their focal points participate actively in all local coordination forums and strengthen collaboration with social assistance services and local authorities. • ACTED, RAC Repairs and Maintenance: will begin repairs and maintenance on the RACs in the coming days. This will include necessary updates and fixes to ensure the facilities are in good condition. • Cash for Rent enrolment is schedule: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Chisinau: Enrolment has started and will continue on Tuesday and Wednesday. ○ Balti: The team will conduct enrolments in the north on Tuesday and Wednesday. ○ Cahul: Enrolments in the south are scheduled for Thursday. ○ We will coordinate with CRS, share the data to support with enrolment of the beneficiaries. <p>PIN: In March, is set to begin the disbursement of cash payments targeting over 130 HH. Each HH will receive support of €200, covering expenses for a four-month period for utilities. This initiative will cover the same locations previously used for our winter clothes distribution operations. The distribution for these households is nearly complete.</p>	
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<p>NEXT MEETING</p>	<p>The Deputy Coordinator, <i>Athina Nalmpanti</i> announced that this is her final meeting with the BNWG and expressed her heartfelt gratitude to all partners, and the chairperson Andrea for a very fulfilling experience, and accomplishments made.</p> <p><i>Almothana Hasan</i> will take over the responsibilities as Deputy Coordinator of the BNWG.</p> <p>The chairperson expresses gratitude to <i>Athina Nalmpanti</i> for her support over the past year as part of the BNWG, and extended a warm welcome to <i>Almothana Hasan</i>, who will be stepping into the Deputy Coordinator role. Almothana will also be involved in different sector groups and support various activities.</p> <p>27th of May</p>	
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