

Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

January - December 2023

Inclusion of the needs of refugees, including Roma and LGBTIQ+ refugees, across GBV and Gender Equality National Programmes and their action plans for 2023-2027.

Collaboration with Women-Led Organizations (WLOs) has been strengthened, resulting in a more sustainable and localized GBV response in line with GBV principles.

GBV Risk Mitigation across sectors remains a priority. A **GBV Safety Audit** was carried out and a GBV risk mitigation tool on accommodation was developed.

POPULATION STATISTICS

As of end 2023, over **120,000** refugees from Ukraine have remained in the Republic of Moldova.

59% are females

44% are children, of whom **21%** are girls

18% are older persons

According to 2023 **Multi-Sector Needs Assessment (MSNA)**, most people know where to seek specialized GBV services. At the same time, respondents indicated that they perceive fear of retaliation as the main **barrier to access GBV services** (55%), followed by shame (49%), lack of awareness about services (17%) and lack of trust in service providers (12%).

KEY FIGURES

During 2023, UNHCR trained approximately 700 persons on GBV Safe Disclosure, GBV Minimum Standards and GBV monitoring and evaluation. In addition, two GBV Risk Mitigation workshops were conducted.

UNHCR, in partnership with the Woman-Led Organization **Casa Marioarei**, supported:

- 1,665 persons with GBV prevention activities.
- 363 persons with psychological services.
- 439 persons with gynecological services.
- 310 persons with legal aid services.

UNHCR, in partnership with **UNAIDS and local partners**, supported:

- 1,794 refugees with informative sessions on HIV and Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH).
- 949 refugees with HIV prevention services.
- 944 persons with case management, including help on continued access to HIV treatment and testing.

HIGHLIGHTS

National GBV and Gender Equality programmes

UNHCR contributed to the Action Plans of the National Programmes on GBV and Gender Equality, with capacity strengthening, information sharing and policy guidance. The GBV Sub-Working Group's Workplan directly aligns with government objectives, ensuring their seamless integration into the 2024 Refugee Response Plan (RRP) planning process.

Work with Women-Led Organizations (WLOs)

UNHCR supported at least five WLOs in 2023, including through a partnership for GBV prevention and response and studies on social and cultural aspects contributing to GBV and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA), including on the Roma community. These studies will result in training toolkits focused on enhancing capacity of local and national actors.



ANTI-VIOLENCE CAFE

22 women attended Anti-Violence Cafes organized by UNHCR's partner Casa Marioarei as part of their GBV prevention activities conducted during the 16 Days of Activism Against GBV.

Photo credit: Petru Lupu, UNHCR

Operational Response

- **GBV prevention activities:** UNHCR's partner Casa Marioarei implemented GBV prevention activities for refugee and host community women aimed at contributing to long-term shifts in gender inequitable norms, and promoting a culture of non-violence and respect for women, girls and other at-risk groups. The activities strengthened social cohesion, resulting in positive interactions and support between refugee and host community women, and improving access to psychological support and gynecological services.
- **GBV response:** Casa Marioarei provided GBV shelter, case management, psychosocial, health and legal aid services in an integrated manner with the Government, ensuring complementarity and quality of life-saving services.
- **GBV, Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) and HIV:** Through a partnership with UNAIDS and five local organizations working with persons living with HIV, sex workers, LGBTIQ+ people, people who use drugs and other key populations, HIV prevention, harm reduction and response services were provided. Partners also conducted mental health and psychosocial support group sessions, with refugee and host community sex workers, and trained them to be community volunteers and reach marginalized groups.
- **Localized and accessible trainings on GBV:** UNHCR Moldova translated [UNHCR's GBV Safe Disclosure Package](#) into Russian and Romanian, ensuring materials are accessible for persons with disabilities through subtitled and voiced-over videos.

Working with Partners

- Building on Moldova's 2023 Global Refugee Forum pledge to ensure the inclusion of refugees in the national GBV system, UNHCR is actively collaborating with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection. Furthermore, UNHCR also started

collaboration with the National Agency for Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence.

REFUGEE COORDINATION FORUM

- The **GBV Sub-Working Group** is co-chaired by UNHCR and UNFPA. 10 meetings were held in 2023.
- A **GBV Safety Audit** was conducted in 2023 to identify GBV risks and provide sector-specific recommendations to mitigate them. The exercise covered several groups, including women and adolescent girls, Roma women and sex workers. Main GBV risks in Moldova include intimate-partner violence, online GBV and risks in private accommodation.
- A **GBV risk mitigation tool** was developed to help reducing risks during the consolidation process of Refugee Accommodation Centres and ensuring the safe referral of GBV disclosures.
- **Capacity building:** targeted capacity building on safe disclosure of GBV, GBV minimum standards, GBV risk mitigation, and GBV monitoring and evaluation. This contributed to diversifying and scaling up safe entry points for GBV disclosures, better designed GBV projects and further participation of actors in coordination spaces.
- The GBV Sub-Working Group **advocated on the harms of mandatory reporting of GBV in Moldova**. In 2022, a legal analysis paper was published, and in 2023 an informative session was conducted in collaboration with the US-based project Mandatory Reporting is Not Neutral. Based on these initiatives, WHO started advocacy with the Ministry of Health to take practical steps to change mandatory reporting frameworks and practices.



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