



Palanca Local Coordination Forum Meeting

Meeting Minutes – 9 October 2024

1. Meeting Details

Date	9 October 2024
Time	12:00 – 13:00
Chair	Volokh Karina, UNHCR Field Associate
Reporting	Volokh Karina, UNHCR Field Associate
Email	volokh@unhcr.org

2. Agenda

1. Introduction
2. Update on recent developments in Palanca Border Reception Center
3. Activity updates from participants
4. AoB

3. Information collection and relevant links

Moldova operational data portal: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine/location/10784>

Local Refugee Coordination operational data portal: <https://data.unhcr.org/en/search?>

4. Participants (Name, Position, Organization)

- Karina Volokh, UNHCR
- Pierre Alejandro Chacón Zambrano, UNHCR
- Irina Spivacenco, Blue Dot
- Mihail Macovetchi, CDA
- Alexandru Sardaru, ACTED
- Olga Costenco, IOM
- Eugen Cazoti, ACR



5. Information collection and relevant links		
Agenda	Discussion	Agreements/Actions
<p>Introduction and Update on recent developments in Palanca Border Reception Center</p> <p>Mrs. Karina Volokh, UNHCR Snr. Field Assistant, volokh@unhcr.org</p>	<p>UNHCR opened the meeting and shared the following updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 17th July, a local consultation for the 2025-2026 Refugee Response Plan (RRP) was held in Causeni and was attended by 23 representatives from local authorities, CSO and INGO. Input provided by attendees to the Local Consultations are being used to inform the drafting of the 2025-2026 RRP. On 18th and 22nd July, a Multi-functional Team reviewed the reconsideration process for the Cash Assistance program. On 19th July, strong winds exceeded safe levels for the tent’s stability in the Border Crossing Point, prompting immediate action to prevent potential damage or injury. UNHCR removed the UNHCR tent from the waiting area from the Palanca BCP. Also, on 15th August, the broken tent in the Palanca BRC was removed and taken to the UNHCR warehouse in Chisinau. On 22nd and 23rd, Moldtelecom workers successfully replaced the damaged satellite pole to restore service reliability in the BRC. Following the replacement, the Internet network was restarted, restoring connectivity for users. On 7th August, UNHCR held a meeting with the Border Police to gather detailed information regarding the average number of asylum seekers in the Ștefan Vodă district - including trends over recent months- to facilitate the provision of hygienic kits after exploration of common challenges faced by asylum seekers. On 8th August, the World Food Programme (WFP), jointly with Action Against Hunger (AAH), visited the Palanca Border Reception Center to observe the distribution of hot meals to refugees. During the visit, they met with the refugees to understand their experiences and needs. UNHCR showed them the facility, 	



outlining the various services offered by each organization to support those in need. This collaboration highlights the collective efforts to ensure that refugees receive essential assistance and support during a challenging time.

- On 8th August, IOM Chief of Mission, Ester Ruiz de Azua, visited the Palanca Border Reception Center, where UNHCR provided an overview of the facility and the organizations operating there, as well as the highlights regarding main needs faced by refugees at their arrival to the center.
- On 20th August, UNHCR held a meeting with the Territorial Agency for Social Assistance of Stefan Voda to gather information on the current number of refugees in the Stefan Voda district. This collaboration aims to prepare for the upcoming winter Non-Food Items (NFI) distribution, ensuring that refugees and local vulnerable people receive the necessary supplies to stay warm and safe during the colder months. The meeting highlights the importance of coordination between agencies to address the needs of vulnerable populations effectively.
- On 21st August, UNHCR met with the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) to discuss potential future presence in the Causeni and Stefan Voda districts. During the visit, UNHCR provided an overview of the territory and the current needs in the Causeni and Stefan Voda districts. The discussions focused on how IFRC could establish a presence in these areas to enhance support for refugees and vulnerable communities.
- On 22nd August, due to the reduced influx of people, IOM has removed a single container previously used by the medical team at the Palanca Border Reception Center. Moving forward, IOM medical team will share space with the operations team. Additionally, starting August 22nd, IOM buses will operate on a reduced schedule, running only once a week on Thursdays. These adjustments reflect the changing needs at the border and aim to optimize resource allocation while continuing to support the remaining refugee population.



- On 13th September, the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) has concluded its operational presence at the Palanca Border Reception Center, resulting in the removal of their storage container. DRC's departure will be coordinated with other organizations to ensure that support for refugees continues seamlessly.
- On 19th September, Anne-Marie Deutschlander, the new Representative of UNHCR Moldova, visited the Palanca Border Reception Center to familiarize with the operations on the ground. The UNHCR field team, along with representatives from IGSU Causeni, provided a tour of the facility and discussed the services being offered to refugees, as well as context information.
- On 1st October, UNHCR met with the Territorial Agency for Social Assistance of Stefan Voda to plan for the distribution of non-food items (NFIs) scheduled for the coming months. The discussion focused on coordinating efforts to ensure that refugees and vulnerable populations receive the necessary support.
- On 2nd October, UNHCR, together with CDA, visited the social worker in Palanca to register newly arrived refugees. This effort ensures that the new arrivals receive the necessary support and services, facilitating their integration and access to resources in the area.
- Since 5th October, the cleaning of WASH facilities in the BRC has been reestablished.
- Since the beginning of October, IOM medical team has been visiting the local hospital twice a week to provide essential medical assistance to those in need. During these visits, the team conducts health assessments and ensures that patients receive the necessary care and support.



- UNHCR continues to conduct regular visits to the Palanca BCP to monitor the flow of people entering and leaving Moldova. These visits aim to gather insights on the current situation, identify emerging issues, and engage with partners to address the challenges faced by individuals.

Evacuations:

From 10th July until today, several refugees were evacuated by GLORIA and received by UNHCR at the Palanca Border Reception Center, ensuring that all evacuees received essential services during the process. The Refugees were transported to Romania by IOM. During their evacuation, they were assisted with medical checkups, access to child-friendly spaces, and the provision of hot meals, hot drinks, and travel kits.

Evacuations	Gloria	Transportation to RACs	ACTED
From 10th July	60	From 10th July	15
August	60	August	27
September	68	September	3
October till today	17	October till today	0
Total:	205	Total:	45

UNHCR reminded partners about the possibility for local CSO to access the funding opportunities published every month by the Inter-Agency Coordination Unit.

Inter-Agency coordination, updated the attendees on the RRP drafting process. All organizations interested in submitting projects have a deadline of 18 November. An initial draft of the narrative chapter of the 2025-2026 RRP will be shared with sector leads by the end of October. The findings from the local consultation in Causeni for



	<p>Causeni and Stefan Voda cover the context in Palanca and are being used to inform the RRP drafting process.</p> <p>Additionally, UNHCR announced that next week the Nansen Refugee Award will take place in Geneva, featuring UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador Valentina Naforntita, along with Zaharia and Tatiana Arama from Palanca village representing Moldova. The people of Moldova received an Honourable Mention for their remarkable humanitarian efforts in the 2024 UNHCR Nansen Refugee Award.</p>	
<p>Activity updates from participants</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blue Dot – Blue Dot will be at the Palanca Border Reception Center until the end of the year, after which they will close their operation and shift to Mobile Teams in the Stefan Voda and Causeni districts. This decision comes as a response to budget optimization and a decrease in the number of people arriving to the Palanca Border Reception Center. Their focus will now be on assisting communities, particularly through parenting programs in RACs and facilitating the integration of refugees with local populations. Since July 10th, they have supported 98 children and 99 adults. • CDA – Since September, only three staff members are conducting monitoring visits at the Palanca Border Crossing Point (BCP). As of October 1, IGM staff are no longer present at the Palanca BCP, although they still maintain an office there. These changes are due to internal restructuring, and there is hope that new staff will be onboarded soon. • ACTED – Since July 10th, 45 people have been transported from the Palanca Border Reception Center. Across Moldova, 336 individuals have requested special transportation from ACTED to various locations, including IGM offices, hospitals, and embassy. ACTED has begun distributing hygiene kits provided by UNHCR in the RACs. They will continue operations until the end of the year and will communicate any changes thereafter. Additionally, ACTED has requested UNHCR to reinstall the tent at 	



	<p>the Palanca Border to provide shelter for people waiting, protecting them from adverse weather conditions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACR – ACR continue offering hot meals, hot drinks and water for refugees. At this time, ACR has no information about their operational presence for the next year. • IOM – Since July 10, IOM has transported 205 people to Romania, including 128 females, and 68 children. All individuals received medical assistance and check-ups prior to travel. Currently, they plan to maintain their presence for the next year, but further details are not yet available. 	
6. Details of the Next Meeting		
Date	06 November 2024	
Time	12:00 – 13:00	
Venue	Palanca Border Reception Center	