

HUNGARY

September – December 2022

Since the opening of the [Budapest Helps! Community Centre](#) over 1,783 refugees from Ukraine had been provided with access to information, legal assistance and various social services by UNHCR and IOM. Most requests for information are for education, accommodation and healthcare.

UNHCR and partners conducted an [Inter-agency Contingency Roundtable](#) on the 30th of September for planning purposes in the event of new mass refugee influxes from Ukraine due to possible further escalations of the ongoing armed hostilities coupled with harsh winter weather conditions.

In advance to the winter season, UNHCR and partners began [winterization preparedness](#) in September. To date, UNHCR has provided jackets, blankets and other winter item in addition to voucher support for 3,000 individuals.

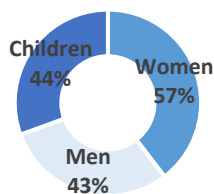
BORDER CROSSINGS TO HUNGARY since 24 Feb 2022

3.6 M total border crossings to Hungary (11th December)

1.8 M crossing directly from Ukraine

1.7 M crossing via Romania border

Disaggregation



32,850 applications for Temporary Protection in Hungary (11th December)



At the beginning of the winter season, UNHCR began its distribution of winter coats for refugee Ukrainian children. Photo credit UNHCR/Erno Simon

UNHCR PRESENCE IN HUNGARY

STAFF:

- **58** Total staff
- **21** International Staff

OFFICES:

- **1** UNHCR Representation for Central Europe located in Budapest



Operational Context

Since the start of the Ukraine crisis on 24 February 2022, Hungary has maintained open borders for people fleeing Ukraine. By mid- December, the number of border crossings from Ukraine has totaled 3.6 M, with 1.8 M crossings directly from the Ukraine border and 1.7 M crossings from the Romanian border. While the significant majority move on to other European countries, over **32,850 individuals have applied for Temporary Protection status in Hungary** (as of 11th of December). Many have urgent protection needs and underlying vulnerabilities, including **persons with disabilities**. Pendular movements between Ukraine and Hungary remain a consistent trend as many families return to Ukraine to obtain documents, check on family members and personal properties. UNHCR continues to maintain Hungary as a **Level 3 Emergency**, the highest possible designation in order to be able to respond in the quickest manner in the event of a significant additional influx.

UNHCR ensures a safe and protective environment for vulnerable refugees and their families, in close cooperation with the Hungarian Government, and **equitable access to basic assistance and protection of all refugee women, girls, men, boys and persons with specific needs, including Roma refugees**. UNHCR and partners continue to actively support refugees arriving in Hungary to meet their basic needs and access protection and emergency assistance, such as receiving vital access to information, referral to psycho-social support, and assistance finding short and long-term accommodation, and accessing specialized services. “Blue Dot” support centres provide information and assistance to those arriving to Hungary in Zahony, Beregsurany, and Tiszabecs and via a mobile unit. To date, over 10,000 people have been assisted through the Blue Dots. As the winter season is underway, UNHCR and partners have already begun the distribution of winter jackets and gloves to vulnerable refugees throughout Hungary and will continue distributions throughout the winter season.

As the influx of refugees from Ukraine is increasingly placing more pressure on the national systems, UNHCR has evolved its response to focus on strengthening national capacities to **support refugee inclusion into national systems while promoting of their active participation in the labour market**. Through the newly established Budapest Helps! Community Center, in coordination with IOM and the Budapest Municipality, UNHCR is leading inclusion focused capacity-building, empowerment, and community events for refugee communities, in collaboration with partners and refugee-led organizations, focusing on the most vulnerable.



At the Budapest Helps! Community Center, UNHCR and partner Next Steps provide psycho-social support for children using a therapy dog called Noir. Photo Credit: UNHCR/Zsolt Balla

UNHCR and partners are continuing to reinforce **communication and legal counselling** to ensure those arriving from Ukraine remain fully informed about procedures for applying for Temporary Protection, as well as the associated rights and services. Additionally, UNHCR is working with local counterpart organizations to improve screening and identification of those with **specific vulnerabilities**, notably older people and persons with limited mobility or physical impairments, while identification and referral of **unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) to specialized services** continues to be prioritized.

Protection from sexual abuse and exploitation (PSEA) remains a critical priority, particularly for women at risk and within the digital landscapes. Ensuring that people of concern understand their rights, can access assistance, and can communicate any risks or report instances of sexual abuse and exploitation to humanitarian actors is crucial. Further investment is needed to prevent the threat of illegal activity along border crossing points, including **trafficking and exploitation** – particularly given the arriving population is mainly comprised of women and children.

Working with Partners

UNHCR works in close coordination partners to support refugees and asylum-seekers as well as with state entities including local and municipal authorities, UN agencies, NGOs, humanitarian partners, civil society organizations and other relevant stakeholders providing assistance to those seeking protection.

As part of the Ukraine Situation response, UNHCR leads and coordinates the **Refugee Coordination Forum (RCF)** at country-level in Hungary to ensure harmonized response within national efforts and among inter-agency partners, NGOs, volunteers and other stakeholders, with associated **Working Groups** (Protection – including Child Protection and Education, and Basic Needs – including Shelter, Food, and Non-Food Items) and two cross-cutting task forces (PSEA, MHPSS) to effectively coordinate inter-agency partner’s response.

UNHCR has 12 active partnership agreements with the following organizations: Cordelia Foundation, Hungarian Baptist Aid, Hungarian Charity of the Order of Malta, Hungarian Helsinki Committee (HHC), Hungarian Red Cross, Hungarian Reformed Church Aid, Mandak House, Menedék, NANE, Next Step, Romaversitas, and ULE Association.

In addition to the partnership agreements, UNHCR supports Refugee Led Organizations (RLOs) that have been actively supporting the Ukraine crisis response from the beginning. While their overarching aim is to support refugees in their basic needs, accessing services and providing them with mental and psychosocial support, they also emphasize the importance of community building and inclusion. Currently, UNHCR has grant agreements with Unity, Lexis, and the Foundation of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church.



Refugee children from Ukraine spent four carefree days at a camp in Szolnok, Hungary. The camp was organized with the Hungarian Red Cross and UNHCR. Photo Credit: UNHCR/Zsolt Balla

UNHCR Response

Protection

- As part of UNHCR’s work on compliance of national legal frameworks within overall international refugee law, UNHCR conducted a multi-functional mission to the Serbian border alongside UNHCR Serbia colleagues and government counterparts in Hungary and Serbia. The primary objective of the mission was to monitor and update current trends and practices at the border between Hungary and Serbia, related to lack of access to territory for people seeking international protection in Hungary, returns, and the issue of “push backs” from Hungary to Serbia.

- UNHCR focuses on [enhancing and scaling up national protection capacities](#) providing additional support and technical expertise through trainings and workshops. Thus far, UNHCR has provided trainings to over 1,500 people on the prevention of GBV and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, legal services and “Knowing your Rights”. In particular, during the reporting period, UNHCR conducted two high-level events outlined below:
 - UNHCR convened a high-level Technical Round Table on digital Risks in the Ukraine refugee crisis. Keynote speakers included representation from the Office of the EU Anti-Trafficking Coordinator, the European Commission Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs; the Office of Special Representative and Coordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and the largest Facebook Group in Hungary supporting Ukrainian refugees. The session included 4 main topics: Challenges in identifying harmful content in online communities and channels and how to address this; how to strengthen safety and reliability of online channels; how to better detect arising risk patterns and trends and improve knowledge-sharing, and linking refugees to relevant and reliable information, support and protection services.
 - UNHCR jointly organized the annual Statelessness Professional Day together with the National Directorate-General for Aliens Policing (NDGAP). The in-person event entailed a personal account on statelessness by the Deputy Commissioner for Fundamental Rights, followed by presentations by UNHCR. The main audience were case workers of the NDGAP who also work on statelessness claims. The presentations focused on the international legal framework around nationality and statelessness and the second presentation was about evidence assessment about statelessness, highlighting UNHCR guidelines and international best practices.
- As part of its Child Protection response, UNHCR is supporting [access to education](#) to ensure continuous learning for refugee children arriving to Hungary, by reinforcing existing refugee-led initiatives and providing valuable education support. UNHCR’s support includes initiatives for parents on how to enroll children in Hungarian schools, language courses in Hungarian, and continuous advocacy efforts through the Education Working Group.
- UNHCR is currently [working alongside Municipalities](#) throughout Hungary in order to map out existing services, development areas for future collaboration and how to better tailor support for municipalities.

Inter-agency Coordination

- Since the publication of the original Regional Refugee Response Plan, the number and distribution of refugees across the region have changed. As such a [recalibration exercise](#) took place in September to review the existing activities through a country-led and consultative process with partners on the ground. In Hungary, the recalibration has highlighted needs linked to winter, access to education and school enrolment, outreach, and information for the refugee population in Hungary. The budget needs, originally estimated at around \$105 M, were revised down to 75 M \$ and reallocated internally amongst the sectors, to meet winter and basic needs, foster access to education in urban and rural areas and address specific protection needs of the most vulnerable individuals among the refugee population, including minority groups from Ukraine. During the recalibration, the targets of the regional indicators were adjusted, following discussions in the different working groups, taking into consideration the trends of arrivals and the distribution of service providers across the country, with urban centers and border areas more covered than rural counties across the country.
- The Interagency team conducted the first joint [Multi-Sector Needs Assessment \(MSNA\)](#) in Hungary. This was the first comprehensive assessment conducted in Hungary in the context of the Ukrainian refugee situation, reaching over 500 households in private and collective shelters. The MSNA was conducted in September 2022 across a sample of refugee and third-country national (TCNs) households who fled from Ukraine since February 2022 and are currently residing in Hungary to capture the overarching needs of refugees, understand the level of access to basic services, and identify service gaps and refugees'

priorities for 2023. The 2022 MSNA was developed and implemented through an interagency process led by the Refugee Coordination Forum (RCF), with the participation of several organizations and agencies who are part of the RCF. The key findings of the document can be found available on the Ukraine Situation data portal in the following (link).

- On September 30th, 2022, 23 members of the Refugee Coordination Forum (RCF) met to discuss [operational preparedness and response](#) to a potential new, large-scale influx, during the upcoming winter period and will be valid October 2022 to March 2023. The scenario focused on three major drivers of movement, namely increased intensity of the conflict and possible extension of the conflict to new areas; increased population movement away from the eastern regions in response to a lack of heating and harsh winter conditions and finally onward movements due to economic hardship and lack of available basic services in affected areas or areas hosting large numbers of IDPs. The plan prioritizes accommodation, NFI/vouchers, protection and coordination.

Communication and Provision of Information

- UNHCR's [Help Page](#) for Hungary provides refugees with information on Temporary Protection procedures, key contacts and addresses, and referral information for specialized services, including family reunification and legal/social counselling. Links to dedicated information videos in English, Hungarian, Ukrainian and Russian language provide general information on Temporary Protection and associated services available in Hungary. Additional communication channels include an SMS line and a dedicated email to respond to queries, and to allow individuals to provide feedback and share any complaints. As of the 11th of December, there have been 103,000 visits to the website.
- UNHCR established a Telegram Channel that enables one-way communication with Ukrainian refugees in Hungary. To date, there are over 1,400 subscribers. The Telegram Channel allows for refugees to access the important update and information in a platform that is widely used by Ukrainians. Following routine monitoring, the majority of inquires involve information regarding financial support, education, healthcare services, employment and accommodation.

Supply

- UNHCR maintains a warehouse in Budapest to facilitate delivery of core relief items (CRIs) to Ukraine and surrounding countries. Currently the contingency stocks include bedding sets, blankets, hygiene kits, mattresses, quilts and tarpaulins. As stocks are used these will be replenished at regular intervals as part of overall contingency and emergency response planning.

Special Thanks to Donors

UNHCR is especially thankful for the contributions to Hungary

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Links

For further information, please visit the [Ukraine Situation Operational Data Portal](#)

[UNHCR Central Europe](#) • [UNHCR Hungary](#) • [UNHCR Hungary Country Website](#) • [UNHCR Ukraine Emergency Appeal](#)

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