

HIGHLIGHTS

In the reporting period, IOM directly assessed the needs and vulnerabilities of **228 Ukraine nationals and third country nationals (TCNs) fleeing Ukraine**. In total, since the onset of the invasion, IOM completed needs assessments of 343 people. The major needs are food, hygiene items, footwear, clothes and medicines.

IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) is being piloted in Belarus in cooperation with the Belarusian Red Cross (BRC) and the Ministry of Interior.

The IOM-supported hotline on safe migration and combatting human trafficking received **381 requests (22.5 per cent of the total number of queries) for information on entry to, transit through, exit from Belarus** from Ukrainian refugees and third country nationals fleeing the war in Ukraine since 24 February.

As of 9 June, **533 people benefited from the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) programme** in 2022.

SITUATION OVERVIEW

Since 24 February, 32,322 people have entered the country (902 Belarusians, 31,176 Ukrainians, and 244 third country nationals), as reported by the State Border Committee of Belarus.



DTM Country Coordinator conducts first surveying of a Ukrainian refugee © IOM 2022

Currently, the majority of persons arrive in Belarus through Poland, Lithuania and Latvia, while the number of people entering Belarus directly through the Ukraine-Belarus border is low (a couple of people per week on average), as those Ukrainian border control posts are not currently functioning.

Conflict-affected persons are located across the country and are mostly accommodated in private housing. There is, however, a lack of information on the number of refugees and migrants currently staying in Belarus, as well as their location. IOM is piloting DTM activities in Belarus, which will prove essential in monitoring the flow of refugees and migrants fleeing Ukraine, alongside other migrants and in ensuring an effective and targeted humanitarian and protection response.

CONTACTS

CURRENT RESPONSE ACTIVITIES

Due to refugees and migrants being located in different areas throughout the country, IOM Belarus adopts an **individual case-by-case approach** in terms of its response, particularly via establishment of referral mechanisms. To ensure that potential beneficiaries have access to information about humanitarian and protection assistance, including AVRR, IOM Belarus has contacted its partners across the country - local authorities such as the Ministry of Interior and local departments for citizenship and migration and labour and social protection, as well as non-governmental organizations – and shared information on available assistance provided by IOM to ensure preparedness for referrals of potential beneficiaries. Additionally, 6,000 leaflets on IOM's assistance to people fleeing Ukraine have been disseminated across the country.

When potential beneficiaries learn about the available assistance, they contact IOM through email or phone or by approaching the IOM Belarus office in Minsk or its project site in Gomel in the southern region bordering Ukraine as well as through hotline on safe migration.

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

Two IOM field staff members continue to work at the IOM project site in Gomel and one local staff member works in Grodno region. The local staff are identifying the humanitarian needs of the refugees and migrants and providing required assistance, including delivery of food and non-food items, transportation support, mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), vouchers for medications, referrals to medical institutions, and referrals to other organizations, if required. In addition, staff conduct vulnerability screenings to ensure further protection assistance.

In the reporting period, IOM directly assessed the needs and vulnerabilities of 228 Ukraine nationals and third country nationals fleeing Ukraine. **In total, since the onset of the invasion, IOM completed needs assessments of 343 people.** Based on the assessments, the major needs are food, hygiene items, footwear, clothes and medicines. In total, **49 food kits and 50 hygiene kits were distributed to beneficiaries and clothes were procured and delivered to 24 people.**

Six beneficiaries were provided with transportation support required to carry out bureaucratic procedures for their employment.

Vouchers for medications were provided to 22 people, including Ukrainian refugees and migrants. In addition, all the beneficiaries approaching IOM are provided with consultations on the best medical solutions for them and referred to other institutions if needed.

IOM continues to offer psychosocial and psychological support to displaced persons from Ukraine located in Gomel. Consultations are provided by a social worker/psychologist hired at the IOM project site in Gomel. **Psychosocial support was provided to 10 people and 7 people were provided with consultations.**

In addition, in the reporting period, an **agreement with Gomel regional hospital was concluded to ensure further referral of the refugees and migrants with serious medical conditions.**

There are still **stranded migrants** in Belarus who **approach IOM for assistance, including support for voluntary return.** People who have registered for AVRR and are awaiting departure are accommodated either in a hotel or hostel in Minsk and are provided with three meals a day. **Seven hygiene kits and seven food kits were given to the stranded migrants in Grodno region.**

PROTECTION

IOM has been working with **three migrant referral pathways to protection services:** on a government level; through the IOM-supported hotline on safe migration; and on a community level. Thanks to those referrals, IOM is well-positioned to carry out individual vulnerability screenings and needs assessments and provide specialized assistance in line with the identified needs.

Through the established protection referral pathways, Ukrainian refugees and migrants are provided with **employment assistance** in Belarus. This includes **micro-business and entrepreneurship courses (one beneficiary assisted); assistance with payment of special employment permits in compliance with Belarusian legislation (20 refugees assisted); legal assistance/counselling (two refugees assisted).** **One refugee started vocational training** in machine control with the support of IOM. Two more employment support cases are currently in the pipeline, with relevant training contracts being revised.



IOM Belarus offers transportation support within Belarus to refugees and migrants fleeing Ukraine © IOM 2022

Within IOM Belarus's traditional counter-trafficking (CT) activity involving regional **multidisciplinary group (MDG) meetings on counter-trafficking**, IOM – joined by UNICEF and UNHCR – has been sensitizing key country counter-trafficking stakeholders on the CT risks of unaccompanied migrant children who do not wish to claim refugee status and are not covered by the Belarus's legislation and advocating for legislative revisions. An anti-trafficking meeting was held on 8 June in Mogilev for Mogilev CT stakeholders.

ASSISTED VOLUNTARY RETURN AND REINTEGRATION (AVRR)

As of 9 June, **IOM Belarus has provided AVRR support to 533 migrants** (378 males and 155 females), including 132 children, in 2022. The number of Iraqi beneficiaries has been decreasing recently but still accounts for the highest share of the returnees (74.7 per cent). At the same time **there has been an increase in the number of Cuban citizens contacting IOM for voluntary return assistance** (9 per cent). Other countries of origin of migrants returning through the AVRR programme include Sri Lanka, Guinea, Nigeria, Turkey, Ghana, Egypt, India, Russia, Cameroon, Somalia, Republic of Congo, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Pakistan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Burkina-Faso, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Iran, Kenya, Algeria, Georgia, and Norway.

Within the reporting period, **IOM Belarus provided AVRR services to one unaccompanied minor** from Nigeria. The voluntary return was preceded by the minor's best interests assessment (BIA) and family tracing and assessment. The latter was conducted in cooperation with IOM in the country of return. Following BIA and family tracing and assessment, a meeting of the Best Interest Determination (BID) Panel, consisting of IOM, UNHCR, UNICEF and NGOs, took place and the Panel determined that it was in the child's best interests to return to Nigeria to his parents.

As part of the mission's provision of humanitarian support for AVRR applicants, **IOM Belarus paid for an emergency surgery** for one female applicant from Cuba who had a complicated leg fracture. Without the surgery, there was a risk of amputation. The applicant has already been discharged from hospital and is awaiting departure.

COOPERATION WITH PARTNERS

The main challenge in terms of response to the humanitarian situation caused by the war in Ukraine and irregular migration is the lack of data. **DTM is an effective tool to monitor displacement flows and is piloted directly by IOM in Belarus**, with the involvement of the BRC and with the support of the Ministry of Interior. The questionnaire to track movement, intentions, and needs of migrants has been developed, incorporating inputs from all the relevant stakeholders. A of 9 June, **five kick-off regional trainings have been held for the enumerators** in Gomel, Vitebsk, Grodno, Minsk and Mogilev, with the last training for Brest planned for 13 June. During these trainings, DTM was presented to the participants, along with the questionnaire. The trainings also cover the different scenarios of the survey in the Kobo system so that the enumerators are familiar with the survey and data collection process. In addition, tablets were procured for the enumerators. **In Belarus, DTM will collect data on the movements and needs of refugees and migrants who have fled the war in Ukraine, as well as other stranded migrants and refugees.** The implementation of DTM is timely given the complex humanitarian situation that started in summer 2021 with the arrival of thousands of migrants to Belarus with intentions to cross into the European Union.

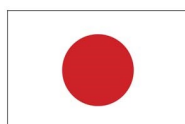
IOM, in coordination with the public association "Business Women Club," located in Brest city, continues to **provide information to requesting migrants and refugees on counter-trafficking and safe migration through its hotline**. From 24 February to 6 June, the hotline received **381 requests for information on entry to, transit through, and exit from Belarus in connection with the war in Ukraine**, which amounts to approximately **22.5 per cent of all consultations provided** during this period. **During the last week (31 May - 6 June), the number of Ukraine-related requests has significantly increased, amounting to 33.1 per cent of all the requests.** Topics of consultations provided by the hotline also include employment, movement restrictions related to COVID-19, and education abroad, among other areas.

IOM's partner, the Belarusian Movement of Medical Workers (BMMW), continued supporting migrants in Grodno region. Seven consultations on AVRR solutions were provided to migrants in collaboration with IOM Grodno local staff and seven hygiene and food kits were given to migrants. In Gomel, BMMW also provided consultations on best solutions for further movement to Ukrainian refugees, and 20 beneficiaries were referred by the NGO to IOM field staff in Gomel for further assistance.

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