

HIGHLIGHTS

According to IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), as of 2 July, there are approximately **6,632 Ukrainian refugees and 896 third country nationals (TCNs)** present in Belarus.

Since the start of the war in Ukraine, IOM has provided humanitarian assistance to **793 persons** fleeing Ukraine and protection assistance to **80 Ukraine nationals and 4 TCNs**.

The IOM-supported hotline on safe migration and combatting human trafficking received over **776 requests (27.2% of the total number of queries)** from refugees and TCNs fleeing Ukraine since 24 February concerning migration issues and the assistance available in Belarus.



Ukraine nationals who approached IOM project site in Vitebsk received food and hygiene kits © IOM 2022

SITUATION OVERVIEW

Since 24 February, **47,987 people have entered Belarus** (902 Belarusians, 46,841 Ukrainians, and 244 third country nationals), as reported by the State Border Committee of Belarus.

Gaps in data are being addressed by the rollout of IOM's DTM, implemented in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior (Mol) of Belarus and the Belarusian Red Cross (BRC). The country's first DTM report was published in July and estimated that 6,632 Ukrainian refugees and 896 TCNs were present in the territory of Belarus. For the continuation of DTM activities from August to November 2022, a revised questionnaire to capture the long-term needs and intentions of refugees and migrants has been prepared in coordination with Mol.

CURRENT RESPONSE ACTIVITIES

As refugees and migrants in Belarus are spread across the country, IOM staff are present in five out of six regions of Belarus (Minsk, Gomel, Mogilev, Vitebsk and Brest) conducting vulnerability screenings, referrals and ensuring comprehensive and timely assistance.

In the reporting period, 87 people approached IOM for assistance. This brings the total number of people who approached IOM for support since the start of the war to 939 individuals. They were screened on potential vulnerabilities, assessed on their needs and necessary assistance was provided or planned.

CONTACTS

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

During the reporting period, 116 beneficiaries received several forms of humanitarian assistance from IOM:

- 80 food kits were delivered to refugees from Ukraine;
- 80 hygiene kits were distributed to beneficiaries;
- 28 beneficiaries received clothes, footwear and household items;
- 6 beneficiaries were provided with accommodation support;
- 13 people received vouchers for medicine, while medications were procured for 5 vulnerable beneficiaries and
- 1 person was referred to a medical institution for further treatment;
- Mental health and psychosocial support were provided to 6 people;
- 1 person received transportation support;
- 13 people were provided with information and counselling support and referrals to other institutions and organizations for best solutions.

Since IOM established a system of direct assistance provision to refugees and migrants fleeing Ukraine in mid-May, the organization has assisted 793 people through several forms of humanitarian aid:

- 572 food kits were delivered to refugees from Ukraine;
- 572 hygiene kits were distributed to beneficiaries;
- 159 beneficiaries received clothes, footwear and household items;
- 10 beneficiaries were provided with accommodation support;
- 93 people received vouchers for medicines;
- Medicine and medical supplies were procured for 15 vulnerable beneficiaries;
- 11 people were referred to medical institutions for further treatment;
- 15 people received transportation support;
- Psychosocial support was provided to 60 people and 29 people received additional consultations;
- 114 people were provided with information and counselling support and referrals to other institutions and organizations for best solutions.

Additionally, in the reporting period, IOM assisted 15 stranded migrants from other countries with shelter support, as well as provided food and hygiene items.

Emergency food and hygiene kits were provided to 17 stranded migrants from Syria, Egypt and Sudan who approached IOM at its project site in Brest region. IOM staff in Brest conducted consultations with migrants to identify possible solutions for their specific needs.

PROTECTION

In addition to humanitarian assistance, IOM also supports refugees and migrants fleeing Ukraine with protection assistance, including securing employment in Belarus and voluntary return to the countries of origin for TCNs.

In the reporting period, nine beneficiaries received protection assistance:

- 7 persons were assisted with the payment of employment-related translations, certified by a notary;
- 2 persons were assisted with the payment of medical check-ups needed to get employed.

In total, 80 people have already benefitted from employment facilitation and legal aid services:

- IOM paid the state fees for 26 employment permits;
- 41 people received employment-related assistance and legal aid (payment for services);
- 2 persons were assisted with medical check-ups for employment;
- 11 individuals were assisted through IOM sponsorship for vocational training.

Since 24 February, four TCNs who fled Ukraine have been provided with voluntary humanitarian return to their countries of origin.

ASSISTED VOLUNTARY RETURN AND REINTEGRATION (AVRR)

The EU-funded project “Helping Belarus address the phenomenon of increasing numbers of irregular migrants” through which IOM Belarus had been providing AVRR assistance ended on 17 July.

IOM continues to receive requests for AVRR support and seeks opportunities to fund especially vulnerable persons on a case-by-case basis. In particular, IOM Belarus sends eligible requests for assistance to the Humanitarian Assistance to Stranded Migrants (HASM) Fund, led by IOM Headquarters, to ensure the voluntary humanitarian return of migrants stranded in Belarus.

In 2022, a total of 577 vulnerable migrants returned to their countries of origin or legal residence through the AVRR programme or voluntary humanitarian return.

COOPERATION WITH PARTNERS

IOM’s DTM programme was launched in Belarus in June, with the involvement of the BRC and the support of the Mol. After the first DTM report was published in July, enumerators continued conducting further interviews with migrants and refugees for the collection of more precise data. The second DTM report, as of 5 August, is under preparation and will be issued by the end of August. Meanwhile, preparations are ongoing for the continuation of DTM activities from August to November 2022. A questionnaire about the long-term needs and intentions of refugees and migrants, as well as challenges they face while staying in the country, was drafted in coordination with the Mol.

On 9 August, the UN Refugee Operational working group conducted a meeting, with the participation of IOM, UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, WHO, BRC, and UNHCR as a lead of the working group. IOM presented the results of its recent activities in response to the war in Ukraine.

IOM’s NGO partner, the Belarusian Movement of Medical Workers (BMMW), continued its activities in Gomel, Brest, Vitebsk and Mogilev regions. In particular, the NGO provided consultations to Ukrainian refugees and migrants and referred 58 people to IOM for further assistance.

IOM Belarus provided its inputs to the Fifth Inter-Agency Update on the Regional Response Plan (RRP). The update, coordinated by UNHCR and conducted on a monthly basis, involves the sharing of activities conducted by UN agencies in the Ukrainian response. The RRP recalibration process will reprioritize the areas of winterization and education and socio-economic inclusion. The revised population planning figure of 30,000 remaining in Belarus by the end of December 2022 (70,000 individuals crossing the border) is the same as originally envisaged.

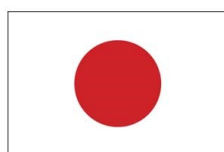
To ensure that information about IOM’s assistance reaches potential beneficiaries, IOM supports the hotline on safe migration and combatting human trafficking, which is maintained by its partner NGO, the “Business Women Club”. The toll-free hotline provides consultations on various issues related to travel and stay abroad, such as employment, movement restrictions related to COVID-19, education abroad, visa issues, and useful contact information, among other areas. Since the start of the war in Ukraine, the hotline has played a crucial role in referring refugees and migrants to available in-country services, particularly those provided by IOM. From 2 to 15 August, the hotline provided 80 consultations to refugees and TCNs fleeing Ukraine on migration issues and available assistance in Belarus, amounting to 34 per cent of all the consultations provided. Overall, since 24 February, the hotline has provided 776 consultations to people fleeing Ukraine.

Some of the most popular requests from Ukrainian refugees during the reporting period included applying for refugee status, employment opportunities, the entry of relatives from Ukraine through Lithuania or Poland, the movement of Ukrainian nationals from the Russian Federation to Poland through Belarus, and assistance available in the country.

IOM ACTIVITIES ARE SUPPORTED BY:



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