

## HIGHLIGHTS

Since the start of the war, IOM has provided humanitarian assistance to **1,509 persons** fleeing Ukraine and protection assistance to **175 Ukraine nationals and third country nationals (TCNs)** in Belarus.

Since 24 February, the IOM-supported hotline on safe migration and combatting human trafficking received over **1,357 requests** (29.1% of the total number of queries) concerning migration issues and assistance available in Belarus for refugees and TCNs fleeing Ukraine.

In 2022, IOM Belarus provided voluntary return assistance to a total of **707 migrants**.



IOM staff delivers household items to © IOM 2022

## SITUATION OVERVIEW

Since 24 February, 66,864 Ukrainian nationals have entered Belarus, as reported by the [State Border Committee of Belarus](#).

In Belarus, several social benefits apply to Ukrainian nationals. They were introduced by the revised decree number 420 “On the Stay of Citizens of Ukraine in the Republic of Belarus”, which facilitates employment, legal status, education, pensions and medical assistance for Ukrainians.

At the same time, the difficult humanitarian situation with irregular migrants in Belarus continues. According to open sources, including the State Border Committee of Belarus, the Polish Border Guard, the Lithuanian State Border Guard Service and others, irregular attempts to cross borders between Belarus and the European Union happen every day. In 2022, at least five deaths have been reported on the Belarus-EU borders.

According to the assessments within IOM’s [Displacement Tracking Matrix \(DTM\) report](#), as of 5 August, there are 7,211 Ukrainian refugees and 1,121 irregular migrants, including TCNs from Ukraine, remaining in the territory of Belarus.

## CURRENT RESPONSE ACTIVITIES

In November, IOM Belarus established its fifth project site in Grodno. As a result, IOM is present in all six regions of the country – Minsk, Gomel, Mogilev, Vitebsk, Brest and Grodno – and provides support to migrants and refugees, including through vulnerability screenings, referrals and delivering humanitarian assistance.

## CONTACTS

### 1. DATA

Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) activities continued with support in the field from the BRC. The second round of DTM was concluded on 30 November with over 800 interviews collected. The report based on these interviews will be available in December and will cover not only the profiles, intentions and urgent needs of migrants and refugees, but also winterization and schooling needs, intentions to return to Ukraine and integration prospects for migrants and refugees intending to remain in Belarus for a longer period.

On 29 November, a roundtable with representatives of state authorities, non-governmental partners and international organizations was organized by BRC to discuss the preliminary results of the DTM data collected in round two. The roundtable participants learned about the profile of the survey respondents, their travel routes and intentions, key needs and challenges of integration in Belarus. Additionally, the next steps and possibilities of using DTM in Belarus more widely to collect and analyze data were discussed. The roundtable participants also exchanged their experiences of providing humanitarian assistance to migrants and refugees from Ukraine in Belarus, noting the successes, challenges and targeted solutions in the continuation of such activities.



DTM country coordinator presents the preliminary results of the second round of DTM © IOM 2022

### 2. HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

#### RESPONSE TO REFUGEES

In the reporting period, 236 people approached IOM for assistance. This brings the total number of people IOM who applied for assistance from IOM since the start of the war to 1,654 individuals. IOM screened these individuals for potential vulnerabilities, conducted needs assessments and provided or planned for necessary assistance.

In total, since mid-May, the Organization has already assisted 1,509 people through several forms of humanitarian aid. In the view of low temperatures in Belarus during winter, the main focus in term of humanitarian assistance is made on winterization, including provision of shelter, warm clothes, footwear and household equipment.

Type of assistance	Number of refugees reached in November	Total number of refugees since the start of the war
WINTERIZATION		
Accommodation	15	46
Non-food items (including warm clothes, footwear and household items)	108	441 (including 238 items of warm clothing and footwear and 45 household items)

Type of assistance	Number of refugees reached in November	Total number of refugees since the start of the war
HEALTH		
Vouchers for medicine	38	335
Medication	5	45
Referral to medical institutions	2	25
Psychosocial support	59	155
Psychological consultations	8	53
OTHER ASSISTANCE		
Food items	152	1,151
Hygiene items	152	1,151
Transportation support	16	68
Counselling support, referral to other institutions for case management	17	185

IOM Belarus spoke to one of the refugees it provided assistance to, 70-year-old Tatsiana from Mariupol.

She left Ukraine a month after the full-scale war started and came to the Belarusian city of Vitebsk where relatives of her late husband live.

She took up a job as cleaning lady in one of the schools and was provided with a room in the dormitory. IOM Belarus helped Tatsiana to furnish the room, provided food, hygiene items and other non-food items (NFIs).

Tatsiana appreciates the calm and quiet environment of Vitebsk but, nevertheless, misses her home and hopes to return to Mariupol as soon as the war is over.

You can read Tatsiana's story and watch a video about her on [IOM Belarus website](#).



70-year-old Tatsiana from Mariupol © IOM 2022



Tatsiana receives assistance from IOM to furnish her new room © IOM 2022

## RESPONSE TO IRREGULAR MIGRANTS

In the reporting period, 236 people approached IOM for assistance. This brings the total number of people IOM who applied for assistance from IOM since the start of the war to 1,654 individuals. IOM screened these individuals for potential vulnerabilities, conducted needs assessments and provided or planned for necessary assistance.

Type of assistance	Number of refugees reached in November
Food items	176
Hygiene items	165
Non-food items	17
Accommodation support	108
Medication	9
Referral to medical institutions	3
Psychosocial support	14
Counselling support	42

### 3. PROTECTION

In addition to humanitarian assistance, IOM also supports refugees and migrants fleeing Ukraine with protection assistance, including securing employment in Belarus through the payment of legal aid, employment permits, and assisting with the voluntary return of TCNs to their countries of origin.

In the reporting period, 34 individuals received protection assistance from IOM: 27 persons benefitted from payments for employment-related legal aid, including translations certified by a notary; 5 beneficiaries started vocational training in floristics and physiotherapy; 1 person benefitted from a medical check-up allowing them to be employed; 1 TCN voluntarily returned home.

**In total, since mid-May, 175 people have benefitted from IOM's protection assistance:**

- 27 people got their employment permits paid for by IOM;
- 108 people received employment-related assistance and legal aid (payment for services);
- 4 persons were assisted with medical check-ups for employment;
- 26 individuals were assisted through IOM sponsorship for vocational training.
- 10 TCNs who fled the war in Ukraine were assisted with voluntary return to their countries of origin.

In addition to the return support provided to TCNs fleeing Ukraine, IOM also helps vulnerable migrants from other countries with return assistance. In November, IOM Belarus provided voluntary return assistance to 84 migrants.

Overall, in 2022, IOM Belarus provided voluntary return assistance to 707 persons. These individuals have returned to 35 countries of origin, including Iraq, Cuba, Iran, Sri Lanka, Guinea, Nigeria and others.



#### 4. AWARENESS RAISING

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 migrants and refugees to available in-country services, particularly those provided by IOM. In November, the hotline provided 159 consultations to refugees and TCNs fleeing Ukraine on migration issues and available assistance in Belarus, amounting to 31.4 per cent of all the consultations provided. Overall, since 24 February, the hotline has provided 1,357 consultations to people fleeing Ukraine.

#### COOPERATION WITH PARTNERS

For better provision of assistance to refugees and migrants, IOM works closely with numerous partners – governmental entities, mainly the Ministry of Interior mandated with migration issues in the country; UN agencies; and civil society organizations, including the Belarusian Red Cross (BRC), Belarusian Movement of Medical Workers (BMMW) and Business Women Club.

With the expansion of IOM Belarus' geographical presence and consequent increase in its capacity in all regions of the country, from 24 to 25 November, the mission held a two-day training for all staff members working in the regional project sites. The training introduced IOM staff to all the aspects of working at the Organization, including emergency response, protection, administrative issues, communication and others.

IOM's NGO partner, the Belarusian Movement of Medical Workers, has referred 168 people – refugees from Ukraine as well as other migrants – to IOM for further humanitarian and protection assistance.

On 1 November, IOM attended the monthly meeting of the Refugee Coordination Forum (RCF) led by UNHCR, which serves as platform for the exchange of information and coordination of assistance to refugees from Ukraine in Belarus between the UN agencies, governmental partners and the Belarusian Red Cross. The meeting focused on the practical application of the recently revised Decree of the President envisaging social benefits to Ukrainian refugees, their access to education and medical services. Following the RCF meeting and on request of the participants, a meeting to clarify the revised decree and its provisions was organized on 18 November by the Ministry of Interior with the participation of the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Healthcare and Ministry of Labour and Social Protection.

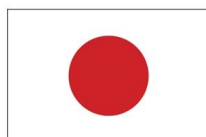


Staff members deepen their knowledge in protection aspects of humanitarian work © IOM 2022

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