

HIGHLIGHTS

Since the start of the war in Ukraine, IOM has provided humanitarian assistance to **1,720 persons** fleeing Ukraine and protection assistance to **209 Ukraine nationals and third country nationals (TCNs)** in Belarus.

In 2022, IOM Belarus provided humanitarian assistance to **278 stranded migrants** from other countries.

Moreover, throughout the year, the IOM-supported hotline on safe migration and combatting human trafficking received over **1,486 requests** (29.5% of the total number of queries) concerning migration issues and assistance available in Belarus for refugees and TCNs fleeing Ukraine

IOM Belarus also provided voluntary return assistance to a total of **735 migrants**. In December 28 people returned home within the programme.

SITUATION OVERVIEW

Since 24 February, 74,432 Ukrainian nationals have entered Belarus, as reported by the [State Border Committee of Belarus](#). On average, 1,500 enter Belarusian territory weekly from Poland, Lithuania and Latvia. It has been observed that Ukrainians also come to Belarus through the Russian Federation, however, sufficient data is unavailable owing to virtually no border control between the two countries.

Migrants from other countries continue to attempt irregular crossings on the border between Belarus and the European Union and often remain stranded in Belarus, requiring humanitarian assistance.

Deadly incidents at the border with the EU have become more frequent due to the harsh weather conditions. In December, the Belarusian State Border Committee reported three deaths at the Belarus-Poland border, which brings the number of deaths in 2022 to 8.

CURRENT RESPONSE ACTIVITIES

By the end of the year, IOM had established and maintained presence in all six regions of the country compared to January 2022 when only one project site in Grodno was functioning in addition to the office in Minsk. The expansion of the organization's presence across the country has enabled IOM to provide support to many migrants and refugees, including through vulnerability screenings, referrals and the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

CONTACTS

DATA

The second round of the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) was concluded with over 800 interviews collected. The report will be published in January 2023 and will cover not only the profiles and urgent needs of migrants and refugees, but also winterization and schooling needs, intentions of return to Ukraine and integration prospects for migrants and refugees intending to remain in Belarus for a longer period.

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

ASSISTANCE TO REFUGEES

In the reporting period, 180 people approached IOM for assistance. This brings the total number of people who applied for assistance from IOM since the start of the war to 1,834 individuals. IOM screened these individuals for potential vulnerabilities, conducted needs assessments and provided or planned for necessary assistance.

In 2022, IOM Belarus assisted a total of 1,720 people impacted by the war in Ukraine through several forms of humanitarian aid. In recent months, due to the low temperatures in Belarus during the winter season, the focus of humanitarian assistance has been on winterization, including the provision of shelter, warm clothes, footwear and relevant household equipment.

The table below summarizes the range of assistance provided to refugees by IOM Belarus.

Type of assistance	Number of refugees reached in December	Total number of refugees since the start of the war
WINTERIZATION		
Accommodation	7	53
Non-food items (including warm clothes, footwear and household items)	52	493
HEALTH		
Vouchers for medicine	57	412
Medication	5	50
Referral to medical institutions	4	29
Psychosocial support	51	206
Psychological consultations	14	67
OTHER ASSISTANCE		
Food items	186	1,337
Hygiene items	186	1,337
Transportation support	3	71
Counselling support, referral to other institutions for case management	15	200

ASSISTANCE TO STRANDED MIGRANTS

As evidenced by IOM's DTM, as well as public sources, vulnerable migrants from other countries also remain in Belarus and have approached IOM to receive various types of humanitarian assistance. Their main reported needs are financial support, food, personal hygiene and sanitary supplies, clothes and shoes, transportation support and support to return home.

Type of assistance	Number of stranded migrants reached in 2022
Food items	118
Hygiene items	118
Non-food items	20
Accommodation support	48
Medication	11
Referral to medical institutions	23
Psychosocial support	35
Transportation support	20
Counselling support	55

PROTECTION

In addition to humanitarian assistance, IOM also supports migrants and refugees 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.

During the reporting period, 34 individuals received protection assistance from IOM: 31 persons benefitted from payments for employment-related legal aid and 3 individuals started vocational training in beauty courses.

In total, since mid-May, 209 people have benefitted from IOM protection assistance:

- 27 people got their employment permits paid for by IOM;
- 139 people received employment-related assistance and legal aid (payment for services);
- 4 persons were assisted with medical check-ups for employment;
- 29 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 December, IOM Belarus provided voluntary return assistance to 28 migrants.

Overall, in 2022, IOM Belarus provided voluntary return assistance to 735 persons. These individuals have returned to 37 countries of origin, including Iraq, Cuba, Iran, Sri Lanka, Nigeria, Guinea and others.

AWARENESS RAISING

To ensure that information about IOM assistance reaches a broad audience, 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 December, the hotline provided 129 consultations to refugees and TCNs fleeing Ukraine on issues related to their movement and legal presence and available assistance in Belarus, amounting to 33.8 per cent of all the consultations provided. Overall, since 24 February, **the hotline has provided 1,486 consultations to people fleeing Ukraine.**

IOM Belarus disseminates information about the available assistance for migrants and refugees through its website and social media channels as well as provides opportunities for individuals to share their experiences. The stories of people such as [Tatsiana from Mariupol](#) help national and international audiences to better understand the feelings of migrants and refugees and their needs.



Tatsiana from Mariupol now lives in Vitebsk, Belarus © IOM 2022

COOPERATION WITH PARTNERS

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

IOM's NGO partner, the Belarusian Movement of Medical Workers, has referred 164 refugees from Ukraine as well as 133 migrants from other countries to IOM for further humanitarian and protection assistance.

In December, IOM Belarus supported the establishment of the crisis centre in Vitebsk maintained by the BRC. The centre opened on 22 December and will accommodate vulnerable people, including migrants, refugees and victims of human trafficking. IOM delivered household goods and appliances necessary for everyday life.

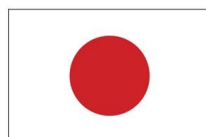


IOM staff delivers household items to the BRC crisis centre in Vitebsk © IOM 2022

IOM ACTIVITIES ARE SUPPORTED BY:



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