



IOM partners bringing aid items to rural areas in Kherson by boat. © Rescue Now 2023

## KEY FIGURES

**21.8M**  
PEOPLE IN NEED

**4.8M**  
RETURNEES IN UKRAINE

**5.1M**  
INTERNALLY DISPLACED PEOPLE

**5.9M**  
REFUGEES

**828k**  
crossings of third country nationals recorded from Ukraine into Poland, Slovakia, Romania, Republic of Moldova, Belarus, and Hungary

## SITUATION OVERVIEW

More than 18 months have passed since the Russian Federation's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, and the ongoing political turmoil and rebellion by Wagner forces against the Russian government highlight the persistent instability in the region. The humanitarian needs remain high, with sudden spikes in response to the developments on the ground, including new hostilities in eastern Ukraine and movements of people within and outside the country.

One devastating consequence of the war has been the **destruction and subsequent depletion of the Kakhovka Reservoir**, leading to urgent and dire humanitarian needs across southern and eastern Ukraine. The repercussions have extended to surrounding regions, where private homes, businesses, and community infrastructure have suffered extensive damage. **Tens of thousands of people in the Dnipropetrovsk Oblast lost access to piped water**, as the reservoir, which serves as a crucial source of drinking water for at least 700,000 individuals, experienced in the first week a staggering 70% decrease in capacity, as reported by Ukrainian authorities.

The impact of the dam's destruction goes beyond immediate humanitarian concerns and threatens livelihoods, food production, and food security. The absence of safe water, inadequate sanitation, and disruptions to health services pose increased health risks, including the potential spread of waterborne diseases. Furthermore, environmental consequences such as groundwater contamination further jeopardize public health and agricultural outputs.

In response to the destruction of the Kakhovka Dam, IOM swiftly conducted rapid needs assessments to gauge the impact of the crisis and support a coordinated and comprehensive humanitarian response. By engaging multiple sectors, critical emergency assistance and preparedness efforts were initiated to support the Kherson Oblast and prevent further deterioration of the situation. **Urgent investments are now required to restore water, sanitation, and energy infrastructure, with particular urgency before the harsh winter conditions set in.**

IOM Flood response has reached over 158,000 people with WASH activities, 39,741 people with NFIs and 1,350 individuals with Shelter support. Additionally, people in need are provided with Health and MHPSS activities as well as cash-based interventions targeting 40,000 people.

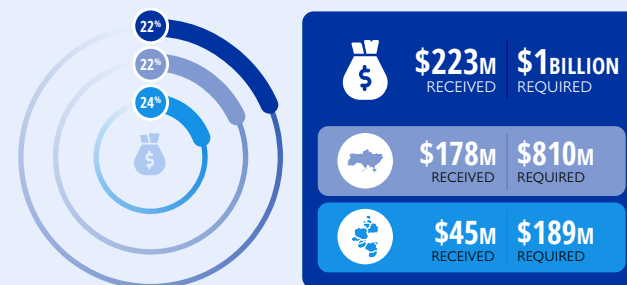


The shifting frontlines in the eastern part of Ukraine present both challenges and opportunities. On one hand, humanitarian organizations now have access to areas that were previously unreachable, allowing them to reach more affected communities. On the other hand, the dynamic situation has resulted in population movements and displacement as people seek safety in different regions.

Neighbouring countries have also experienced changes in mobility patterns and associated needs. For instance, **Bulgaria has witnessed a doubling of refugee arrivals since May 2023**, placing immense pressure on services and aid support. While some of these arrivals may be temporary, already 5,000 additional refugees have sought accommodation support in the country. Hosting countries are also issuing new legislation with a variety of impacts on refugees and migrants.

In Czechia, the recent implementation of the "*Lex UA V*" law means that a significant percentage of refugees no longer meet the vulnerability criteria to receive accommodation assistance. The Ministry of Regional Development estimates that up to **50% of the 70,000 Ukrainians in collective accommodation will need to find alternative solutions**. In the Republic of Moldova, IOM is supporting the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection in its reform of the Social Assistance System, with a focus on promoting inclusion and equitable access to social services for migrants and refugees.

### Financing the response *with thanks to our donors*



IOM is deeply grateful to the governments, organizations, and individuals who have contributed to the [2023 IOM Appeal for Ukraine and Neighbouring Countries](#).

# OVERVIEW OF ACHIEVEMENTS

## INSIDE UKRAINE

In collaboration with more than 70 implementing partners, and through its 12 offices and operations across the country, IOM reaches people in need across 24 oblasts in Ukraine.

TOTAL:

# 4,152,699

individuals reached with IOM support\*

**NON-FOOD ITEMS**  
**NFI** 1,172,350  
individuals reached

**SITE MANAGEMENT SUPPORT**  
277,142  
individuals reached

122,214  
individuals reached through assessment

**HEALTH**  
114,199  
individuals reached

**DURABLE SOLUTIONS**  
92,397  
individuals reached\*\*

**PROTECTION**  
103,740  
individuals reached

332,970  
individuals reached through information provision

**MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT**  
49,804  
individuals reached

**WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE**  
2,427,026  
individuals reached

**MULTI-PURPOSE CASH ASSISTANCE**  
541,823  
individuals reached

**SHELTER**  
1,961,963  
individuals reached



\*People reached is an estimate only, here and throughout this document, intended to identify the number of unique individuals receiving support from IOM, regardless of whether they receive multiple services or items. Figures may not include all individuals reached directly or indirectly and may be adjusted as data and counting methodologies change. Total figure excludes some activities, such as information provision campaigns and referrals.

\*\* Note that this figure is an estimate based on dedicated programming towards durable solutions. Programming such as long-term housing and infrastructure, captured in other sectors, may also be applicable in this area.

This map is for illustration purposes only. Names and boundaries on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM.

# OVERVIEW OF ACHIEVEMENTS IN SELECTED NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES

TOTAL:  
**423,888**  
individuals reached with IOM support

**NFI** NON-FOOD ITEMS  
**98,353**  
individuals reached

**WATER, SANITATION  
AND HYGIENE**  
**93,468**  
individuals reached

**HUMANITARIAN MOVEMENT**  
**61,743**  
individuals reached

**SITE MANAGEMENT SUPPORT**  
**11,340**  
individuals reached

**HEALTH**  
**47,560**  
individuals reached

**MENTAL HEALTH AND  
PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT**  
**43,017**  
individuals reached

**SOCIOECONOMIC INCLUSION**  
**79,530**  
individuals reached\*

**PROTECTION**  
**139,659**  
individuals reached

**1,219,543**  
individuals reached through  
information provision

**MULTI-PURPOSE  
CASH ASSISTANCE**  
**38,362**  
individuals reached

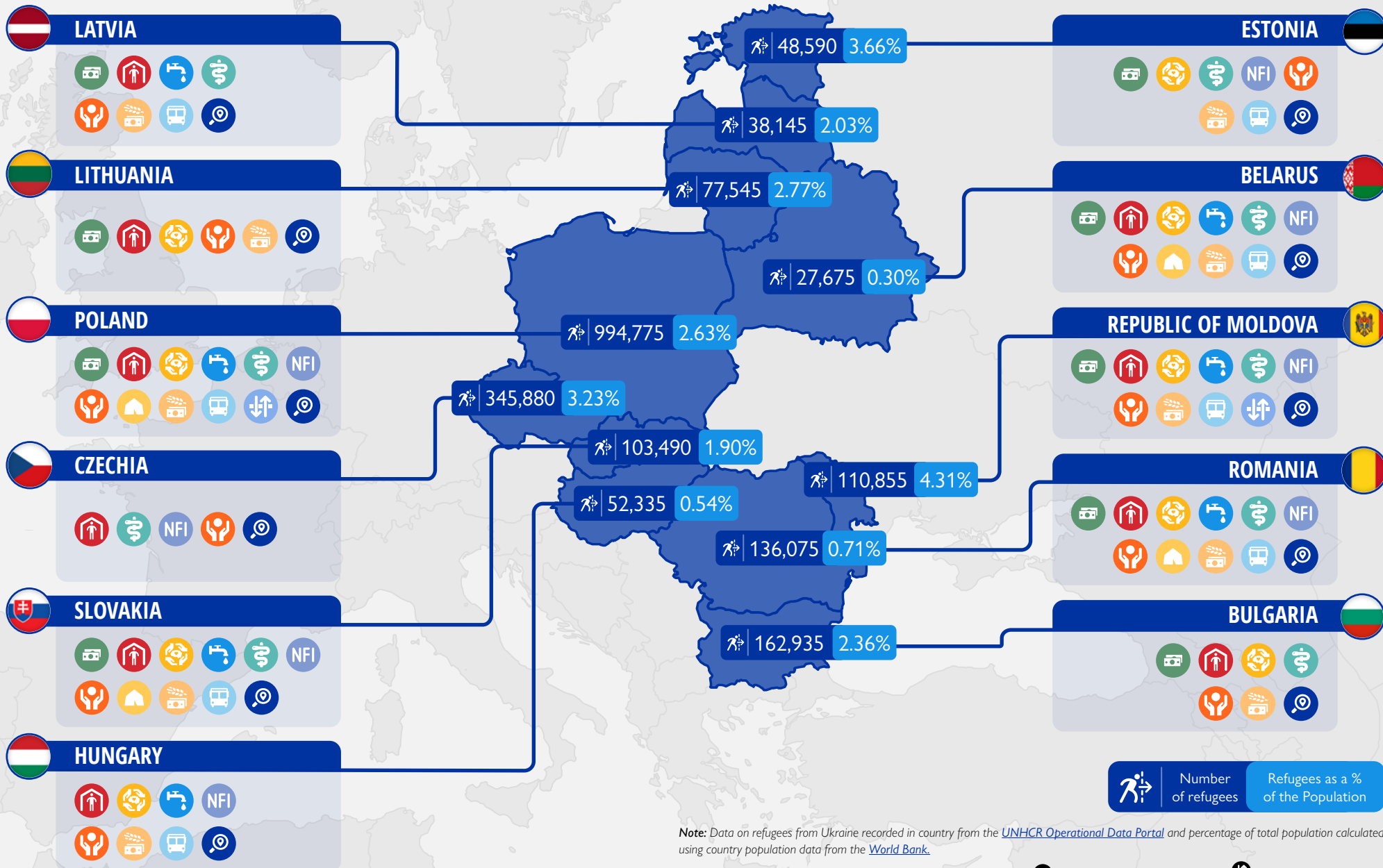
**SHELTER**  
**27,805**  
individuals reached



\* Note that this figure is an estimate based on dedicated programming towards socioeconomic inclusion. Other programming captured in sectors including protection and shelter may also be applicable in this area.

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# OVERVIEW OF SECTORS BY COUNTRY



Number of refugees | 
 Refugees as a % of the Population

**Note:** Data on refugees from Ukraine recorded in country from the [UNHCR Operational Data Portal](#) and percentage of total population calculated using country population data from the [World Bank](#).

Sector symbols are defined on previous pages, additional symbols include: (Displacement Tracking Matrix) and (Humanitarian Border Management).

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Now marking over 500 days since the full-scale invasion, the [World Bank's 2023 Recovery and Reconstruction Needs Assessment](#) depicts a grim picture, highlighting the devastation caused by the conflict, leading to the largest housing crisis in the country's history. The report estimates that the thousands of buildings damaged or destroyed are worth approximately US\$135 billion. **In 2022 alone, nearly 1.4 million residential units were severely damaged.** The Eastern, Southern, and Northern regions of Ukraine witnessed extensive destruction of housing, infrastructure, and basic services, which will result in long-term displacement.

Population movements inside of Ukraine have created divergent housing needs across different regions, both in urban and rural contexts. Rental prices have skyrocketed, and housing shortages have become prevalent. Many vulnerable individuals, including the elderly, single-headed households, and people with disabilities, are still residing in temporary collective centers, without a sense of permanence and stability. For an estimated [74% of IDPs](#), lack of funds to repair damaged houses remains a major obstacle preventing their return to their places of origin.

Even before the war, Ukrainians faced numerous challenges in the housing sector, with limited access to affordable housing, particularly for low-income households. Major cities suffered from unaffordability, overcrowding, and poor housing quality. The Ukraine Humanitarian



Marina, Kateryna, and Olga became friends at a center for displaced persons in Vinnytsia after fleeing the war-ridden Donbass region. © IOM 2022/Gema Cortes



Mariana Kalmakova and her family staying at a temporary accommodation center in Vinnytsia. © IOM 2022/Gema Cortes

Needs Overview (HNO) for 2023 reveals a staggering reality: **8.3 million people, comprising 3.4 million IDPs, 2.5 million returnees, and 2.4 million non-displaced individuals, require shelter support.**

In neighbouring countries, despite the commendable efforts of governments, local communities, and civil society groups, millions of refugees still require assistance. Collective accommodation centers, established early in the response, are either being consolidated, closed or struggling to remain afloat with limited funding, leaving some of the most vulnerable Ukrainian refugees in an even more precarious position. These collective and temporary centers present challenges related to privacy, safety, and dignity, as they were not designed to provide long-term accommodation.

According to the latest data from UNHCR, a notable 36% of Ukrainian refugees have sought shelter in private rentals, with an additional 32% finding temporary accommodation with host families. These arrangements often hinge upon the generosity of hosts, who provide reduced-cost or even free lodging; the support by government benefits; or refugees' own resources. However, as government support diminishes and savings dwindle, the pressing need for sustainable medium- to long-term housing options becomes increasingly urgent.

## KEY SHELTER CONSIDERATIONS

- The concentration of the refugee and IDP population in cities has led to a sharp increase in rental prices and placed immense pressure on essential services and resources, exacerbating the challenges faced by both residents and displaced populations.
- As collective sites close or consolidate and state funding decreases, displaced and refugees are in need of alternative housing solutions.
- Scarce availability of social housing in Ukraine and in several receiving countries, further compounds the problem, making it increasingly difficult for individuals to find affordable housing options.
- [The growing fatigue experienced by host communities](#) has resulted in a substantial rise in the number of refugees seeking alternative accommodation options.
- Refugees and IDPs savings are being depleted, exacerbating the unaffordability of housing and highlighting the urgent need for social rental housing.
- Widespread damage of housing stock in areas of return and those near conflict zones has led to displacement and forced individuals to live in damaged, unsafe, and inadequate accommodation.



IOM has provided levhen with tailored assistance, including legal and psychosocial services, and financial support. © IOM 2022/Iryna Tymchyslyn

### INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT

As families transition from emergency situations to seeking more stability, the need for privacy and control over their lives becomes paramount for their recovery and inclusion. However, barriers to this stability differ between Ukraine and neighbouring countries. In Ukraine, ongoing occupation, and housing damage impact individual living conditions and hinder displaced people’s ability to return, while in neighbouring countries, limited housing stocks and equitable access to affordable rental housing are the main challenges, hindering inclusion in host communities. IOM provides a range of individual shelter solutions, from emergency aid to long-term development-oriented initiatives supporting access to affordable housing solutions. Emergency shelter materials have been distributed to those with damaged homes to provide protection from harsh weather conditions. Homes with light to medium damage have undergone repairs through IOM or through the provision of vouchers or conditional cash for repair. For highly vulnerable individuals in temporary accommodation or at risk of eviction, IOM operates a significant cash-for-rent programme in Ukraine. Large-scale, multiyear development projects are also underway, constructing more units of affordable and social housing for affected populations. Furthermore, IOM supports the establishment of alternative housing solutions, such as community-based housing cooperatives and transitional housing units that act as temporary solution for displaced persons before being handed over to local authorities to act as social housing, as a means to move away from reliance on collective centers.

Access to affordable, safe, and decent housing is the first step to legal and social recognition as a resident, and allows access to social rights and essential service, as well as reduces protection risks, such as exposure to violence, exploitation and abuse. IOM works not only to remove barriers to housing access in coordination with key partners and stakeholders, but also to link it with other social assistance programs in the same territory and community.



IOM supports local medical facilities in Lviv, Ukraine to address the challenge of insufficient access to healthcare for approximately one in seven residents. © IOM Ukraine 2023

### COLLECTIVE SUPPORT

For those in urgent need of shelter, accommodation in collective centers offers a short-term solution, providing life-saving assistance. Over the past year, IOM has collaborated with local authorities, partners, and civil society organizations to repair, retrofit, and enhance existing collective centers in Ukraine and neighbouring countries. Improvements have been made to vital infrastructure such as water and sanitation facilities, heating systems, roofing, windows, and doors. In areas affected by power grid damage, IOM has also installed backup electrical supplies. Energy efficiency initiatives, including insulation, have been implemented to reduce energy consumption and heating costs, while also ensuring greater safety and comfort in cold winter months. To ensure residents can live in safety and dignity, IOM has retrofitted many buildings with partitions, lighting, accessible ramps, and other necessary modifications. Additionally, non-food items like blankets, mattresses, hygiene kits, kitchen sets, electrical items, and washing machines have been distributed to collective centers, enhancing comfort and hygiene for displaced persons, refugees, and migrants.



Providing support for reconstruction in Ukraine is a key area of support for IOM. © IOM 2022

### SHELTER AND SETTLEMENT PROGRAMMING IN UKRAINE

IOM Ukraine supports both temporary and longer term shelter and housing solutions, contributing to people living in conditions of safety, privacy and dignity.



**761**

collective centers improved



**11,062**

damaged Houses/Apartments Repaired



**+81,000**

individuals have been reached with donations of construction materials



**+344,000**

individuals reached with emergency shelter kits

Note: These figures are approximate and represent completed activities, but do not include ongoing or planned ones.

## UNLOCKING HOUSING THROUGH INNOVATIVE LOCAL PARTNERSHIP AND PROGRAMMING

Natalia Ivasiuk was reluctant to leave Ukraine up until the bombings neared her home and blackouts became a daily occurrence. Packing only essential items and cherished disks containing videos from her wedding and her children's christenings, Natalia made the difficult decision to flee with her son Andriy and daughter Sofia. "Printed photos take up a lot of space. And the disks are not very heavy, but they hold the memories of my life. And if anything happens, I will have something to show my children," explained Natalia.

Arriving in Czechia in late 2022, nearly 10 months since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine began, Natalia and her family faced challenges familiar to Ukrainian refugees that arrived earlier: language barriers, job scarcity, difficulties enrolling their children in school, and the search for suitable housing. Natalia recalls her first trying months, "We lived in a single room in a three-room apartment, sharing the space with 12 people from three different families."

However, Natalia and her family recently became beneficiaries of a groundbreaking programme designed to address the housing needs of Ukrainian refugees in Czechia, while also helping to alleviate stress on the housing market that has affected the host population. In collaboration with the Ministry of Regional Development of the Czech Republic (MRD) and non-profit organizations ADRA and Laxus, IOM launched a pilot project named Pronájem s garancí (Rent with a Guarantee). Government commissioned research conducted by the MRD revealed that **a significant percentage of potential landlords were hesitant to rent due to lack of experience, concerns about property damage, and fears of tenants not meeting payment obligations or leaving unexpectedly.** 80% of these potential landlords

had no experience renting their apartments. However, the study also discovered that up to 50% of homeowners expressed a willingness to rent to refugees from Ukraine or individuals in need of housing if certain guarantees and security measures were in place.

**The Pronájem s garancí project was specifically designed to address these concerns while utilizing unoccupied flats and thereby increasing the availability of rental housing for those in need.** The project aims to motivate owners of vacant apartments in two neighbouring towns in Czechia to rent them out on a long-term basis. Participating apartment owners receive a financial bonus that can be used for repairs or maintenance, if necessary, along with comprehensive lease management provided by a specialized company. The project also covers administration fees and, most significantly, the deposit, which poses a substantial financial barrier for many refugees. To enhance accountability and help ensure housing support is complemented by addressing more holistic needs, the programme works with several non-profit organizations to provide additional social services to the new tenants and facilitate communication and other housing-related needs between the parties involved.

Jolana Hájková, a homeowner who initially hesitated to participate in the initiative due to past negative experiences renting gained confidence in the project's comprehensive support system. This support includes a financial bonus, association with a governmental body, and involvement of an international organization. "I don't really care who lives in the apartment. And of course, someone has to offer housing to the refugees. They can't live on the street," emphasized Ms. Hájková, highlighting the importance of providing housing to those in need.

Natalia expressed her gratitude towards IOM and the Laxus organization for their assistance with administrative and organizational matters, stating, "At the time, it sounded like a fairytale to me. I was very afraid that something could go wrong. But their help was invaluable." Natalia has already validated her teaching diploma and is currently learning the Czech language to pursue a career as a teacher's assistant, starting in September.

The pilot accommodation project not only offers practical assistance but also provides a glimmer of hope and stability for refugees like Natalia and her children. With the collaboration of various organizations, support from stakeholders, and the generous contributions from Japan as a donor, this initiative continues to make a positive impact on the lives of those seeking refuge in Czechia.



*"My children don't have to hide in basements or worry about their own lives."*



IOM and its local partner furnished Natalia's rented apartment. © IOM Czechia 2023

Natalia pictured in her new home in Czechia. © IOM Czechia 2023

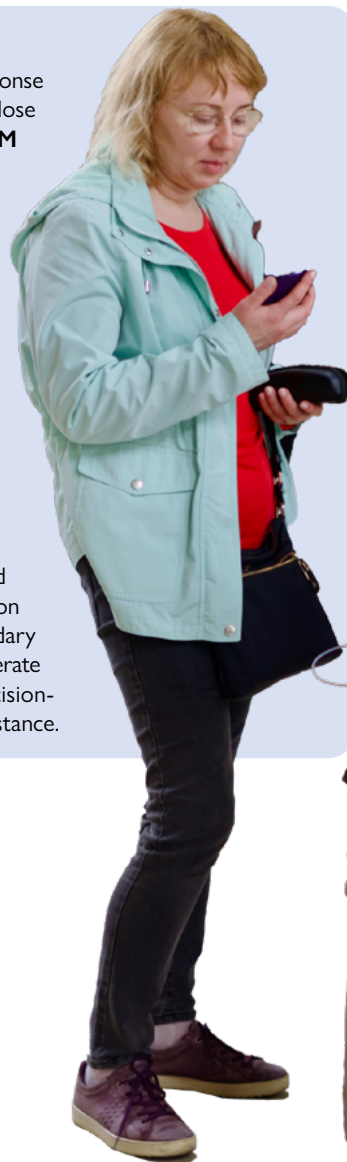
IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) has been a vital resource since the early days of Ukraine's invasion, providing crucial insights for humanitarian efforts. DTM data is widely used to align programming with the needs of different population groups, including those displaced and non-displaced, as well as returnees. It serves to highlight immediate humanitarian needs while also evidencing long-term recovery initiatives, offering a deeper understanding of the evolving situations faced by the war affected populations.

### Rapid understanding for rapid response

When urgent humanitarian needs arise, a swift and coordinated response is crucial to provide timely assistance where it is most needed. In close collaboration with the humanitarian community in Ukraine, **IOM developed the Rapid Needs Assessment (RNA) tool to assess prevailing conditions and priority needs within 48 hours of an event.** The RNA is deployed in coordination with the Inter Cluster Coordination group (ICCG).

The first RNA pilot took place in April 2023 in Kharkiv Oblast, an eastern region of Ukraine heavily impacted by the war and facing significant barriers to accessing basic services. In June 2023, following the destruction of the Kakhovka dam, IOM swiftly conducted three RNAs, in both Kherson and the up-stream Dnipropetrovsk Oblasts. The data collected has played a vital role in informing the response efforts of the UN, IOM, and other partners on the ground, providing crucial insights into population movement, sectoral needs, and vulnerabilities.

Thanks to an established network of field data collection staff and community focal points with specific knowledge of the target population and areas, robust data triangulation was ensured by integrating secondary data from humanitarian and research partners. This enabled IOM to generate reliable and up-to-date information, facilitating evidence-based decision-making and enhancing the coordination of effective humanitarian assistance.



### Understanding needs and challenges over time

A significant number of Ukrainian refugees have expressed their intention to stay in their host countries. Recognizing the importance of understanding challenges and opportunities for socio-economic inclusion, DTM has developed different methods for understanding the situation and informing programming.

One such method is the Socio-economic Inclusion Survey. The survey uses tailored indicators from [IOM's Migrant Integration Index](#) for the local context. It covers a wide range of topics, including demographics, access to services, employment, social inclusion, and current needs. By gathering comprehensive data in these areas, the survey provides a deeper understanding of the experiences and circumstances of refugees from Ukraine.

To better capture the progress and changes over time, **DTM Poland is conducting longitudinal surveys with the same people over several points in time, monitoring their evolving situations.** This will provide valuable insights into the factors that contribute to improved integration and social inclusion outcomes and enable the identification of key milestones, such as advancements in language skills and transitions to private accommodation, as well as the formation of connections within Polish communities.

The data collected through the Socio-economic Inclusion Survey plays a vital role in informing IOM and other national and international actors assisting Ukrainian refugees with rebuilding their lives and fostering relationships in their new country. Survey results contribute to evidence-based decision-making and the development of targeted interventions to support their social inclusion and integration. Regular snapshots focusing on different themes will be released, keeping stakeholders informed about the living situation and progress of Ukrainian refugees in Poland.

*Yuliia Hek, a DTM enumerator, assists a new arrival at Przemyśl train station, Poland. © Alexey Shvirin 2023.*

### LATEST PUBLICATIONS



UKRAINE INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT REPORT  
GENERAL POPULATION SURVEY

[SEE IT HERE](#)



UKRAINIANS AND THIRD-COUNTRY NATIONALS  
CROSSING INTO UKRAINE FROM ABROAD

[SEE IT HERE](#)



## DIFFERENT NAMES, SHARED PURPOSE: PROVIDING HOLISTIC SUPPORT THROUGH MIGRANT RESOURCE CENTERS (MRCs)

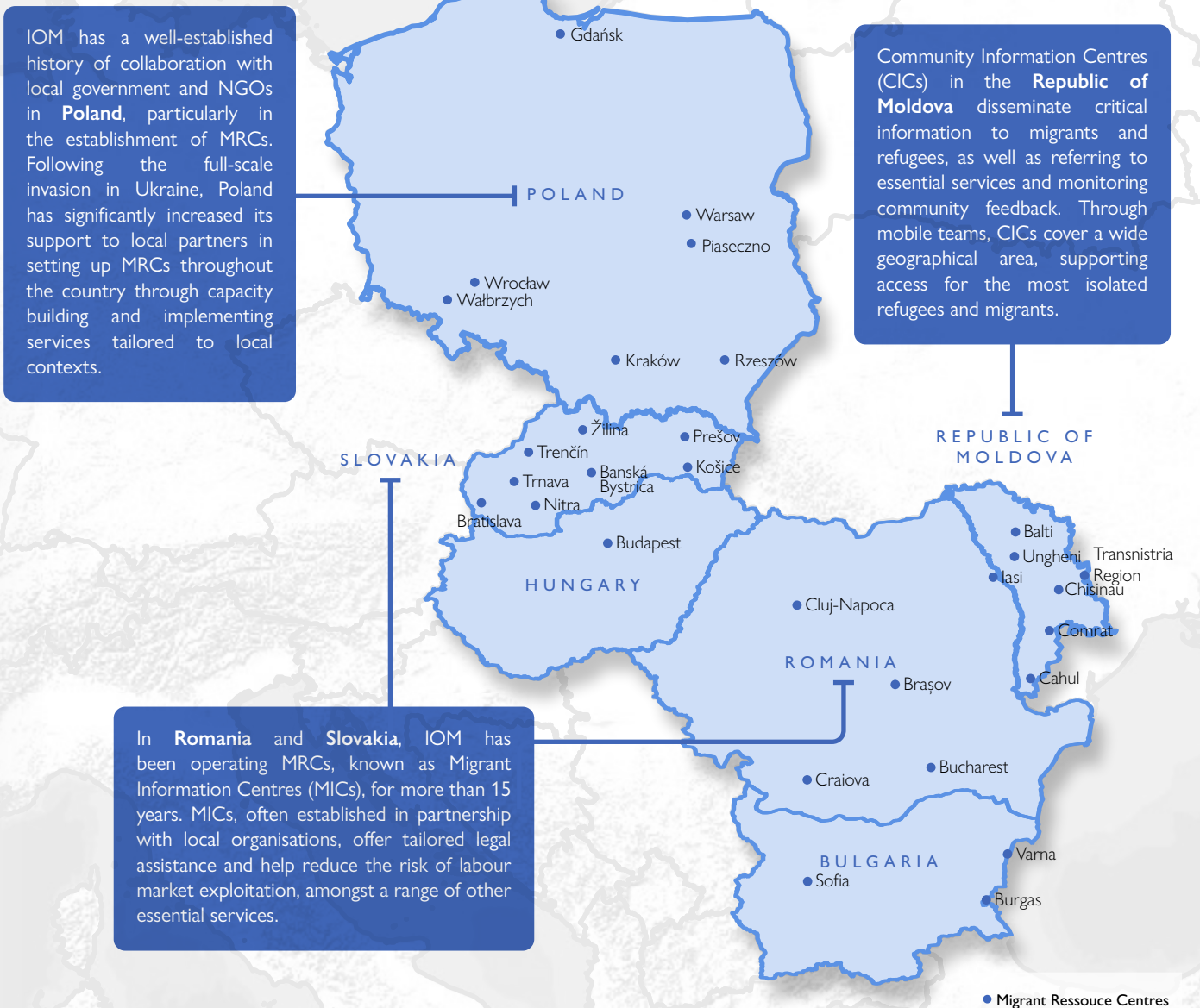
Socio-economic inclusion is an essential support for the people displaced by the war in Ukraine, many of whom have been in neighbouring countries for more than a year now. These individuals have specific and enduring needs that are challenging to address without a comprehensive approach. At the same time, displacement caused by the war in Ukraine has added strain to already fragile social systems in neighbouring countries. Governments and civil society face challenges effectively expanding and adjusting services to meet the evolving needs brought about by the crisis.

Recognizing the urgency of this situation and as part of its broader response to the humanitarian crisis, IOM works with governments and civil society to complement and coordinate existing services, strengthen governance, build capacities, and engage a range of stakeholders to provide effective delivery of services.

Migrant Resource Centers (MRCs) serve as hubs for information, orientation, and direct delivery of services, as well as referral to state and non-state support services. MRCs have operated in the EU and other countries for many years, focusing on socio-economic inclusion and integration of migrant and asylum-seeking populations. By ensuring that migrants have increased capacities to access services and exercise rights, MRCs can be an effective resource to reduce aid dependency. IOM, in response to the war in Ukraine, adapted and expanded the MRC model in neighbouring countries to support a larger caseload of people seeking refuge from the war.

MRCs address the needs of people in a holistic and comprehensive way that is accessible and convenient for affected people. The adaptability and scalability of MRCs enable them to tailor their services to the diverse and particular needs of those affected by the war as well as the specific context in which they operate, filling service gaps while linking people to partner and Government programmes. Trained intercultural mediators, often migrants themselves, play a crucial role in providing access to information and support. Their firsthand experience and multilingual abilities empower them to deliver compassionate and culturally sensitive services through MRCs. Different models – such as mobile delivery or virtual platforms – can also be effective depending on the context and needs. Locally, MRCs have different names, based on mechanism and national context, as shown in this map.

Recognizing the multifaceted challenges faced by migrants and refugees calls for a focus on socio-economic inclusion. MRCs are a critical delivery mechanism to provide comprehensive services and effective local coordination, ultimately fostering a more sustainable and equitable future for the affected population and host communities alike.



*This map is for illustration purposes only. Names and boundaries on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM.*

## ALL UNDER ONE ROOF

### START HERE

#### Reception and Orientation

As people enter an MRC, they are received by specialized intercultural mediators who provide reception and orientation - a first point of contact, information, and support. Depending on needs and a person's situation, more specialized support can be provided through 'protection screening' to identify and support the most sensitive cases.

#### Socio-economic inclusion & Livelihoods

MRCs foster socio-economic inclusion via support with job placements and private sector engagement. They enhance labor market integration by target assistance, language and vocational training, support with the recognition of foreign qualifications. MRCs also support capacity building for labor offices and employers, and facilitate networking with job-matching platforms. MRCs promote entrepreneurship with seed funding, and mentorship. MRCs also work to protect people against labor exploitation and to foster social cohesion. To give people a stable base – often the cornerstone of their recovery – MRCs collaborate with governments and civil society to facilitate access to longer-term housing options through programs involving repair, retrofit, construction, and social rentals. They provide essential information and mediation on security of tenure and occupancy contracts.

#### Special needs and special support

MRCs provide safe, dedicated spaces and specialized support for the most vulnerable people, including persons with disabilities, survivors of gender-based violence and human trafficking, and children. MRCs can be a safe haven for survivors and others with specific needs, fostering growth and empowerment. Childcare facilities within MRCs accommodate families during consultations and activities, and specialists provide support for children with special needs. MRCs promote child integration through extra-curricular activities and social engagement.

#### Referral – connecting to services provided by gov and civil society outside the MRC

To ensure coherence, avoid duplication, and enhance sustainability, MRCs operate within a complementary ecosystem. They refer and connect individuals to government and civil society services, often partnering with local authorities and NGOs in establishing such spaces. MRCs prioritize capacity-building of local actors, promoting equitable access to essential services, and facilitating the integration of affected populations with tailored support. Together, as a united front, MRCs work with host communities to address specific needs and foster long-term resilience.

#### Acute needs

MRCs address the most acute needs with various kinds of assistance, including cash support, medicines, psychosocial support, and short-term accommodation solutions. In-house physicians conduct assessments and directly refer beneficiaries for healthcare, working closely with local clinics and state hospitals. MRCs also offer specialized psychosocial support, from individual and group counselling to socio-relational activities.





Ukrainian beneficiaries attend a seminar in Slovakia on the legal aspects of staying in the country. © IOM Slovakia 2022

Over a year into the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the cost of protracted displacement is felt both within and outside of Ukraine by those who fled the war and the communities hosting them. Savings are running out, public resources are increasingly overstretched, and those who are unable to access sufficient employment or material support can find themselves in increasingly vulnerable situations. This creates a fertile environment for traffickers as well as exploitative employers preying on people in desperate situations, as was found by the [new report prepared by the Regional Anti-Trafficking Task Force](#).

In this context, addressing specific vulnerabilities through targeted action has come to the forefront of IOM’s protection response across the region. IOM Slovakia’s comprehensive effort to expand opportunities for refugees from Ukraine to succeed in the local labour market and avoid exploitative situations provides a prominent example.

“Labour exploitation is one the major concerns for refugees from Ukraine looking to enter Slovakia’s labour market,” says Zuzana Čáčová who is responsible for coordinating capacity building for IOM staff and partners. **“We are working on reducing and eliminating the risk of exploitation through trainings, webinars, seminars, and other awareness raising activities at the IOM information points, at the Slovak-Ukrainian border crossings, at Migrant Information Centres, and in host communities.”**

IOM’s Migration Information Centres (MICs) have been in operation for nearly 17 years and are a key access point for migrants and refugees arriving in Slovakia and looking to integrate into the country’s society and economy. *“I have received important information about my rights and responsibilities in Slovakia. Because the war in Ukraine continues, I have decided to stay in Slovakia and make it my new home. [...] I found out how I could change my legal status to stay in Slovakia long-term. I also got personalised advice about my situation from IOM MIC lawyers,”* explains Maria from Ukraine, who attended a safe employment workshop at a MIC.

In addition to accessing in-person legal, social, and labour counselling at MIC offices in all eight regional towns, and remote counselling provided via info line, email, or website, refugees from Ukraine could also receive advice and support via MIC infopoints at job fairs, community information sessions, workshops, and webinars. Throughout 2022, MIC held “How to find a safe job in Slovakia” seminars in Ukrainian where participants learned what an employment contract should contain, what to do when an employer refused to pay wages, and how to end an employment relationship.

***“We are working on reducing and eliminating the risk of exploitation through trainings, webinars, seminars, and other awareness raising activities at the IOM information points, at the Slovak-Ukrainian border crossings, at Migrant Information Centres, and in host communities.”***

“We have found community information sessions known as Welcoming Slovakia a useful tool to raise awareness among migrants and refugees about life in Slovakia– for instance, residence, employment, business, education, or different social issues,” says Yasmina Stupak, a MIC community outreach coordinator. Session participants additionally learn about the basics of Slovak labour law, the rights of employees, safe job search online, and red flags indicating untrustworthy job advertisements.

“For people from Ukraine who were forced to leave their home, finding a safe and legal job in host country is vitally important to maintain a decent lifestyle and prevent risky coping strategies. Knowing their rights enables them to better protect themselves against potential abuses. It is also beneficial for the Slovakian society – to have an injection of qualified labour force, and also to strengthen its rule of law,” stresses Ms. Čáčová.

Reinforcing this targeted work with refugees from Ukraine are IOM’s wide-reaching capacity building efforts on countering trafficking in persons and gender-based violence, prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, and other protection-related topics. The team organizes and delivers trainings, information seminars, and workshops for frontline workers, partner organisations, service providers, healthcare professionals, volunteers, and others involved in the humanitarian response.



Katarína Božik and Yasmina Stupak, from IOM Bratislava Capacity building team, leading a Counter trafficking training for Ukrainian interpreters from the Assistance center of help, Bottova Bratislava. © IOM 2022/Michal Milla

The IOM capacity building team also operates a safe migration infoline that, in addition to providing information and advice on safe work and travel in Slovakia and abroad, identifies and counsels persons at risk, verifies employment intermediary agencies, and supports applicants with referrals to needed services.

More human trafficking awareness raising work is done by IOM-managed spaces at border crossing points and refugee reception centres, where thematic printed materials in Ukrainian, English, and Slovak containing safety guidelines and useful contacts are disseminated.

Those who prefer digital solutions can download IOM's mobile app [SAFE Travel & Work Abroad](#) that provides key information about human trafficking, safe migration and employment abroad, and emergency contacts. The app is available for free in 11 languages at [Google Play](#), [App Store](#) and website [www.safe.iom.sk](http://www.safe.iom.sk) and can be additionally used as a resource for [education about human trafficking](#).

IOM prioritizes mainstreaming protection as part of comprehensive inclusion support, linking people in need to mid- and long-term accommodation, social assistance, financial support, education and daycare for children, vocational and language training, job placement, livelihoods, and community cohesion programmes, while also continuing addressing specific vulnerabilities and protection risks, such as human trafficking, gender-based violence, and child protection risks, particularly for unaccompanied or separated children.

IOM co-leads, together with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the Regional Anti-Trafficking Task Force established in April 2022 to i) facilitate the compilation and sharing of information and evidence on risks of trafficking in connection with the Ukraine crisis, based on protection monitoring, ii) to support effective and coordinated action of partners involved in anti-trafficking responses at country and regional level, and iii) to provide practical recommendations and advice at the operational level to inform responses to the risks and incidents of trafficking in persons. The Task Force has recently released a report analysing the threats and realities of trafficking within the context of the full-scale Russia-Ukraine war.

*“The team organizes and delivers trainings, information seminars, and workshops for frontline workers, partner organisations, service providers, healthcare professionals, volunteers, and others involved in the humanitarian response.”*



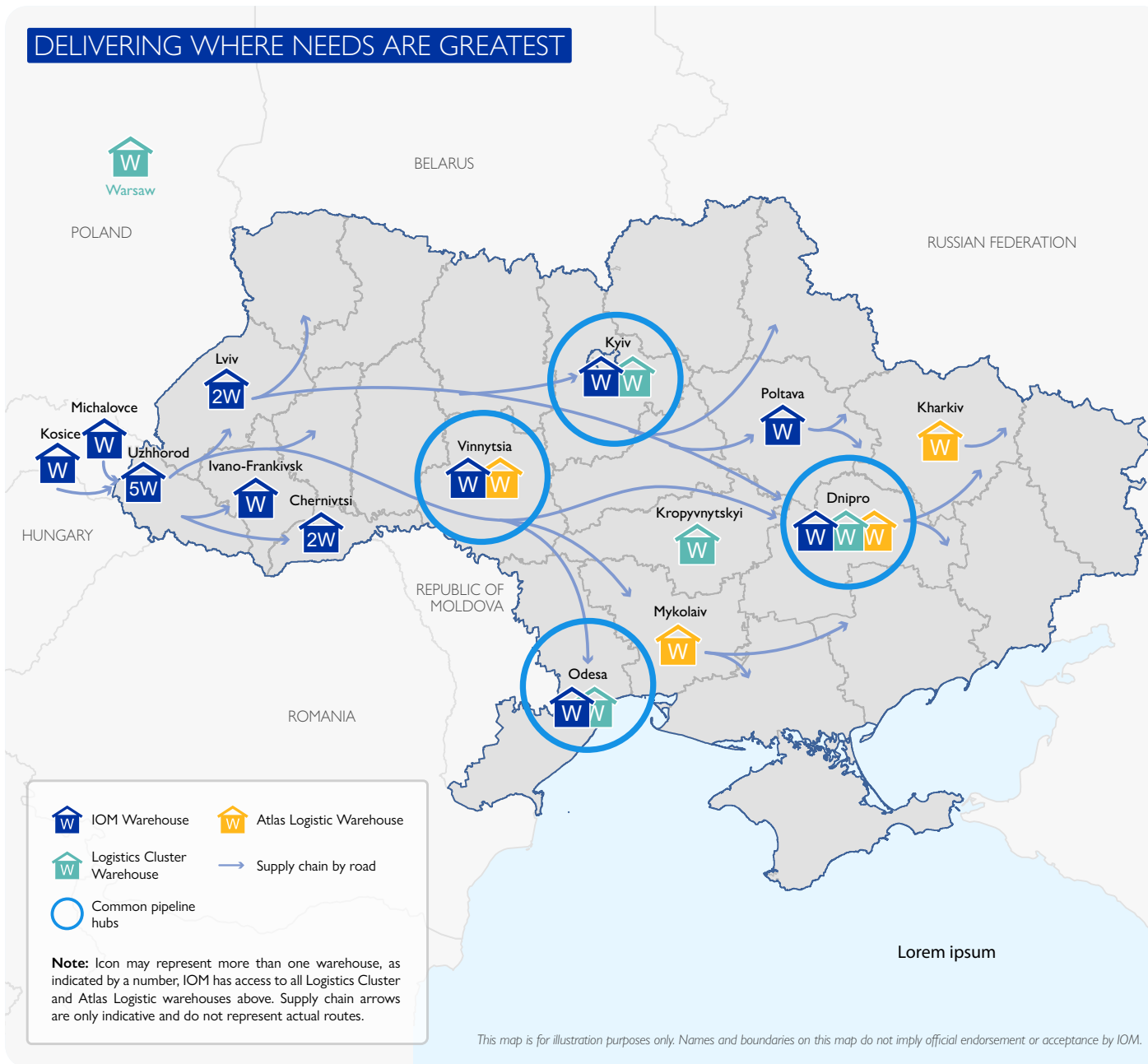
Lýdia Baluchová from IOM Košice explaining the definition of THB at a CT and PSEA training for Border police at Sobrance. © IOM 2023/Zuzana Čáčová



Human Trafficking in the Ukraine Crisis - Regional Anti-Trafficking Task Force | March 2023

[Read the full report here](#)

## DELIVERING WHERE NEEDS ARE GREATEST



## KEY FIGURES



IOM operates more than **14 warehouses** supporting Ukraine from within and in neighbouring countries.



### Common Pipeline

- **15 oblasts covered by 32 partner organizations** (19 national and 13 international organisations)

- **More than 150,000 non-food items delivered** to partners for distribution

IOM's Common Pipeline programme is a crucial lifeline for affected people, expanding its operations in Ukraine and leveraging IOM's global supply chain capabilities. With an increasing number of local partners, this programme plays a pivotal role in delivering essential aid across the country, particularly in rapid responses to immediate and acute crises.

In response to the aftermath of the Kakhovka Dam destruction, IOM's Common Pipeline was able to quickly mobilize critical relief items for delivery. Equipped with humanitarian assistance, distribution training, and access to IOM's warehouse network, partners accessed vital Non-Food Items (NFIs) from the Odesa warehouse for urgent delivery to the affected areas. Despite the challenges posed by the flooding, these items reached affected and displaced communities quickly. To reach isolated areas cut off from the mainland, partners resorted to unconventional means for distribution like small inflatable craft and local fishing boats.

From 6-19 June 2023, through NFI direct distributions and Common Pipeline modalities, IOM provided more than 20,000 items to flood victims. Emphasis was placed on lifesaving supplies, including jerrycans for water storage and hygiene kits for basic sanitation. The programme's ability to address immediate needs swiftly proved invaluable for those affected by the recent acute crisis and demonstrate the Common Pipeline's important role in preparedness.