

## INTER-AGENCY OPERATIONAL UPDATE (UKRAINE REFUGEE SITUATION)

# Republic of Moldova

7 March 2022

The conflict in Ukraine has created a regional humanitarian crisis. Over **1,5 million Ukrainians** have already fled their homes into neighbouring countries. **Moldova** is one of the main refugee-hosting countries and a transit country for onwards.

Some **230 thousand** Ukrainian refugees have entered Moldova since 24 February 2022, with a proportion continuing to Romania, Poland and other countries. Those entering **arrive distressed** and are **heavily affected psychosocially**.

For **updated refugee data**, check out the Ukraine Situation **refugee data portal here: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>**. Coordination of interventions is shaping up, with Government, local actors, INGOs and UN Agencies.

### KEY NUMBERS

## 82,762 Ukrainian refugees

are in Moldova since 24 February 2022 (7 March figure)

### Women & children

89% of Ukrainian refugee arrivals are women and children (only Ukrainian)

### Moldovan response

The Moldovan Government and the local population are showing extraordinary support and response, which are now

The situation in Moldova is evolving rapidly. This weekly update is to provide a first update to the inter-agency community, focusing on the **refugee** situation. However, there are also others who are severely affected by this crisis (third-country nationals for example).

UNHCR and partners are developing a **Refugee Response Plan**, which will form part of a Regional Refugee Response Plan for the Ukraine Situation. This will be an update of the previously shared **4-pager RRRP Summary**.



Moldova experiencing an unprecedented refugee crisis

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Today at Palanca I saw thousands and thousands of people streaming across Ukraine's border crossing with Moldova.

Thousands of stories of separation, anguish, and loss.

A difficult day, but much respect for the many dedicated Moldovan officials and people helping the refugees.



## Operational Context

The Government of Moldova has declared its readiness to receive tens of thousands of refugees from Ukraine and is cooperating with the UN, local and international organizations to respond to the unfolding crisis. The Government has set up a Crisis Management Centre under the Prime Minister's Office and a series of emergency accommodation centers are being established to support arrivals from Ukraine. Coordination is ongoing with partners (including new ones that are arriving), to ensure interventions are complementary to the response of the Government.

On 24 February 2022, the Government of Moldova closed its airspace and announced a State of Emergency, allowing the authorities to establish a special regime of entry and exit from the country; special measures for the protection of refugees, the protection of the population of the Republic of Moldova and of the country's institutions; and a special working regime for economic operators and public institutions.

Entries coming particularly from the southern and south-western parts of Ukraine, including the port city of Odessa. However, border crossings in the North are also seeing a high level of arrivals in need of humanitarian assistance. The situation is volatile and is changing rapidly. The majority of those coming in are women and children, while there are also some men coming through (elderly, single fathers or fathers of families of at least three children). There are also significant needs to support people with special needs (elderly, people with disabilities).

The High Commissioner for Refugees visited Moldova from 3 to 5 March, meeting incoming refugees the President, key Ministries and actors on the ground. He went to refugee-hosting accommodation centres at the southern border of Palanca and in Chişinău.



*Refugee family arriving into Moldova © UNICEF Moldova*





## Achievements



### PROTECTION

#### Achievements and Impact

- A Protection sector working group has been put together to coordinate ongoing efforts, led by UNHCR.
- ACTED is engaged in the transportation of refugees from the border and put in place 10 busses, in cooperation with other local NGOs and municipalities.
- INTERSOS shared a multisectoral needs assessment.
- UNFPA procured 3,000 dignity kits for women, girls and elderly people, of which 1,300 are ready to be delivered on Wednesday, 2 March.
- UN Women printed 34,000 informational leaflets (17,000 in Ukrainian, 10,000 in Russian, 7,000 in English) and they are being handed out at border crossings since 25 February. An additional 10,000 copies of the same leaflets are being printed in Ukrainian. This will support Government to disseminate crucial information (available support services, asylum-seeking process, etc.) to incoming refugees.
- UNHCR, in coordination with UNICEF, UNFPA and IOM is also preparing an additional 5,000 pieces of information materials.
- WHO delivered three speakers, including necessary accessories, to Palanca border crossing on 28 February to play pre-recorded information messages for refugees waiting in line.
- UNODC negotiated the re-programming of use of three rooms, originally intended for women who use drugs, to be used for women refugees with children. This provides safe accommodation for one woman and three children in Ribnita, one woman and two children in Balti and two women and six children in Anenii Noi, with the possibility to add two additional beds.
- UNAIDS mobilized their partners and identified an additional shelter to accommodate LGBTQI+ persons. The local community is in touch with Ukrainians to ensure they are safely assisted. The shelter can offer accommodation and support to six families/couples.
- UNDP supported the GBV center in Gagauzia (Chirsova) to accommodate 23 refugees, incl. 13 children.

#### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- **Moldovan authorities are stretched to the limit and need urgent support.**
- Arrivals are increasing. Border sites seeing an increase of protection needs, as they await transportation to sites. Psychosocial support is a gap.
- Law Center for Advocates, a Moldovan NGO, states that waiting hours at the border in Palanca in the South can be over ten hours. Other challenges are cold weather and issues with documentation to cross.
- Support to government on social assistance mechanisms and targeting of assistance (likely via cash-based transfers)

- Protection, incl. GBV monitoring and referral support - requiring additional protection surge staff.
- Reports have come in of people waiting a few days as they could not get on busses to continue, as they brought pets. This situation is now being resolved.
- PSEA and gender mainstreaming needs to be fully embedded in response.



## EDUCATION

### Achievements and Impact

- Education sector working group is established and first meeting held, organized by UNICEF, the Ministry of Education and UNHCR on 4 March.
- Assessments ongoing.



## HEALTH & NUTRITION

### Achievements and Impact

- Several Health Sector meetings held, with participation of WHO, Ministry of Health and partners.
- WHO procured PPE and triage equipment for Palanca and Ocnita border crossing posts. The items were delivered on 25 February. This includes 300 pieces of hand disinfectant, 200 pieces of hand disinfectant Desderman Pure INT 11, 33,000 pairs of gloves, 50,000 face masks, 33,000 respirators, 50 non-contact infrared thermometers, 50 electronic tonometers, and 50 pulsometers.
- IOM provided food items to the General Inspectorate of Border Police.
- WFP and Action against Hunger mission arrived this week, FAO is on the ground and has a presence.
- UNHCR is providing personal hygiene sets at border crossings.
- UNHCR will provide support to ensure medical services, supplies have arrived.

### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Lack of humanitarian health supplies. As border crossings become more crowded, the risk of the spread of disease is increasing. WASH facilities are needed.
- Law Center for Advocates states that there are serious health concerns, also in the other border crossings beyond Palanca in the northern areas of Moldova. Disability support is needed.
- Support needed to inform refugees on available referral to the medical facilities that provide clinical management of rape and support for cases of sexual abuse.
- Support to the Ministry of Interior Affairs on medical triage and epidemiological surveillance (COVID, cVDPV2), also directly at transit centres.

- Supporting Government in the provision of emergency health-care services and psycho-social counselling.
- There is urgent need for family kits.
- Health supplies are needed for persons suffering from chronic diseases, including HIV/Aids.
- Government needs to be supported on readiness to roll out the vaccination programme for Polio and Measles (sufficient stock is available in Moldova).

**SHELTER & NFIS****Achievements and Impact**

- The Government has stepped in immensely to provide emergency shelter for incoming Ukrainian refugees. Local communities are mobilizing and supporting, and even local politicians are engaged in supporting the transportation of refugees.
- On 2 March, the first shipment of UNHCR-backed humanitarian aid supply to the authorities in Moldova arrived. One-quarter of the around 8,000 thermal blankets were immediately delivered to border crossing points in the South and handed out to refugee families with children and other vulnerable people. The remaining blankets are placed in temporary storage.
- More UNCHR aid supplies are on the way, including sleeping bags, more blankets, tents, hygiene and baby kits, solar lamps and other relief items.
- UNDP will contribute to the immediate response by supporting local communities and local public authorities (LPAs) in their humanitarian assistance efforts to ensure accommodation and basic needs for refugees coming from Ukraine. The Government will be supported to provide temporary accommodation / shelter across the country. As of 27 February, in partnership with LPAs and long-standing programme partners including EU and SDC, UNDP has identified 300 beds available in private accommodation, as well as food supplies, hygiene products for approximately 1 month. An additional 500 beds in public spaces (schools, kindergartens, etc.), necessary NFIs (mattresses, pillows, etc.), food supplies, and

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