

# Republic of Moldova

12 March 2022

There has been tremendous solidarity and hospitality from the Government of Moldova and people for refugees from Ukraine and they continue to provide protection and assistance. The Government has launched an information resource for refugees

[dopomoga.gov.md](http://dopomoga.gov.md) and established a single centre for crisis management which is supported by UNHCR-led refugee coordination mechanism.

Inter-agency operational response update is a collaborative effort of over 45 partners who have joined the response thus far and more who are coming forward to coordinate their efforts under the umbrella of a single refugee response (UN agencies, Red Cross movements, INGOs, and NGOs), under the overall leadership of the Government of Moldova and UNHCR, to respond to the Ukrainian refugee situation in Moldova.

Urgent needs include food, accommodation, transportation, cash assistance, relief items such as winter kits, sanitary material, protection services especially for unaccompanied and separate children, women, and older people.

## STATISTICS

**106,994** Ukrainian refugees and 4,713 third country nationals are currently in Moldova as of 13 March 2022

(Source: Border Police of the Republic of Moldova)

UNHCR Data portal: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>

## Joint press conference organised to brief media about the plan to support refugees.

In picture: Secretary General of the Government of the Republic of Moldova and the Representative of the UN Refugee Agency for Central Europe during the press briefing on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2022.

(Photo: Kiri Atri/ UNHCR)



“Blue Dot” at Palanca border crossing provide safe spaces for community to seek guidance, help and support. (Photo: Erno Simon/ UNHCR)

## Operational Context

The escalation of conflict in Ukraine has resulted in civilian casualties and the destruction of civilian infrastructure and forcing people to flee to Moldova in search of safety, protection, and assistance. While it is difficult to have an exact overview of the displacement, as of 11 March 2022, at least 1.85 million people have been internally displaced inside the Ukraine and more than 2.5 million refugees have already crossed the international borders. As of 13th March 2022, there are 106,994 refugees from Ukraine in Moldova (For the latest figures, please refer to the Ukraine Situation Operational Data Portal <http://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>). Most refugees are women and children because of the crisis's circumstances. The UN estimates that 12 million people inside Ukraine will need relief and protection, while more than 4 million refugees from Ukraine may need protection and assistance in neighbouring countries in the coming months.

In a context of already high inflation, this refugee crisis has had unprecedented social and economic consequences for Moldova's government economy, straining basic services, reducing trade and investment, increasing pressure on scarce natural resources, and, at times, jeopardizing the country's stability and development prospects.

The Government of Moldova is the primary responsibility for refugee protection, including access to services, and serves as the overall coordinator of the refugee response. Thus, in cooperation with Government of Moldova, UNHCR and partners have established an inter-agency refugee response coordination structure in Moldova as part of the Refugee Plan which draws upon the expertise of Authorities, INGO/NGOs, UN agencies in providing leadership to sectoral working groups. On Monday, March 7, UNHCR convened an inter-agency meeting to review the Refugee coordination structure and engage further in a coordinated refugee response plan. Over 120 partners attended the meeting, including the Government, local and international NGOs, and UN agencies, to prioritize sector-based assistance, such as accommodation (which includes food and non-food items, shelter and transport), education, health, protection (including child protection, GBV, Gender and PSEA), cash-based intervention, information management, durable solutions and logistic.

As of 11 March, 93 centres authorized by the Government to host refugees were functional - capacity of 8,636, occupied at 56% (4,848 individuals). The Moldovan government has launched a new information source, [dopomoga.gov.md](http://dopomoga.gov.md), which synchronizes all relevant information on the country's refugee crisis. [Dopomoga.gov.md](http://dopomoga.gov.md) also provides information on the most active social media groups that can assist refugees in Ukraine, as well as Moldovan citizens who want to assist them.

As the refugee response plan evolves, partners are increasing emergency aid stockpiles to assist refugees. Core item stockpiles have been increased to support a response and prepare new influx over a three-month period. This included non-food, tents, food, blankets, and winter clothing. Many agencies have mobilized technical surge personnel to assist with ongoing response efforts, and coordination capacity has been strengthened across agencies to improve joint planning through sector working groups.



*Moldova for Peace campaign was launched in Chisinau. Moldovans showed solidarity in the call for help for refugees from Ukraine. Refugees, as well as volunteers can find useful information on [www.dopomoga.gov.md](http://www.dopomoga.gov.md) and can call the toll-free line 080001527.*

## Update on activities

### Protection

- The **Protection Working Group (PWG)** based in Chisinau was formed with **37 partners**, and co-chaired by the **Bureau for Migration and Asylum (Minister of Internal Affairs)** and **UNHCR**. The PWG commenced its work with an aim of supporting a comprehensive and coordinated protection approaches to Ukrainian refugee situation in Moldova. During its first meeting UNHCR presented an overview of the refugee statistics and potential protection concerns. The PWG has started to plan to have systematic thematic discussion on different protection topics and subgroups on Child Protection (co-lead by UNICEF/UNHCR), Gender (co-lead by UN Women/UNHCR), GBV Sexual and Gender Based Violence and PSEA (co-lead by UNFPA and UNHCR) have been formed.



Refugees boarding bus station in Palanca BCP, that would take them to Romania. Photo: UNHCR/Mihai Eremia

- IOM and UNHCR in support of joint strategy called “Green Corridor” by the Governments of Romania and Moldova are **organizing direct movement of persons of concern from borders to borders (South border of Palanca to Husi in Romania)**. As per the Government of Moldova between 8-11 March, around 6000 people were supported to move from Moldova to Romania as part of the Green Corridor.
- **UNHCR and ACTED are implementing transport from borders areas to a refugee accommodation centre (RAC), and to Causeni/Chisinau railway station or Romania.** UNHCR partner ACTED has organized 102 trips, during which about 2,500 people (55% women & 20% children) have been transported from Palanca and Tudora border crossing points.
- UNFPA, UN Women, UNHCR, OHCHR, IOM, MSF, Law Center of Advocates, WFP, Terre des hommes, ACTED, Action Against Hunger, Caritas Moldova, and INTERSOS reported **regular presence at border crossing points and refugee accommodation centres in Chisinau**. Teams are stationed at the locations to monitor the situation of new arrivals, as well as to provide counselling, transportation, and relief supplies.
- **IOM and UN Women in partnership with CBS-Research launched “mobility, needs and intention survey”.** The survey will collect data through face-to-face interviews at 5 main border crossing points, and 4 major refugee accommodation centers in Palanca, MoldExpo, Manej Sport Arena, Sports Lyceum.
- UNDP, UNOSAT and telecommunications operators in Moldova have set up a ‘**data collaborative**’ on **human mobility** - a form of collaboration in which participants exchange their data - to analyse third



country national and refugee mobility to inform decisions of authorities as well as other partners. The analysis will be further infused by Government data (administrative data) and other data collected through, for example, 'micronarratives', a tool that collects experience, perceptions, and stories (so called 'thick data') of people and, therefore, provides additional qualitative and quantitative information towards a holistic picture of refugee and third country nationals mobility.

- **OHCHR conducted two monitoring visits to refugee accommodation centres** to understand needs of refugees, especially the most vulnerable persons with disability. Recommendation included need for bathrooms adapted to the needs of people with disabilities, lack of information about onward travel, asylum procedures, access to needed medical services for chronic illnesses, difficulties obtaining travel documents, and disrespect for privacy. **Identifying refugee accommodation centre accessible to disabled people is urgent.**

## Child Protection

- UNICEF and UNHCR set up three **Blue Dots at the Otaci border crossing (north), Palanca border crossing (south) and Moldexpo reception centre (Chisinau)**. Blue dots are one-stop safe spaces that provide key information to traveling families and the ability to identify unaccompanied and separated children and ensure their protection. UNICEF is collaborating with partners to increase the system's capacity to provide family-based care placement for unaccompanied and separated children.



Afshan Khan, UNICEF Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia, and the Special Coordinator for the Refugee and Migrant Response in Europe, and Maha Damaj, UNICEF Representative in Moldova, visiting the child friendly spaces at the Blue Dot center in Moldexpo, set up with UNICEF support (Photo: UNICEF)

## Prevention and response to Gender based violence

- **UN Women Moldova initiated a Rapid Gender Assessment (RGA)** to gender sensitive response to Ukraine situation. UN Women has repurposed its on-going programme in Moldova to respond to urgent needs for the Ukrainian crisis. UN Women will be leading the Gender in Humanitarian Action Task Force under the Protection working group.
- **UNFPA continues to operate 10 shelters, eight crisis rooms and a support hotline for gender-based violence survivors.** UNFPA supported volunteers from youth centres distributed 6,000 dignity kits with

menstrual and hygiene product so far and refer pregnant women to medical care units and provide guidance on staying safe in transit. UNFPA is in process of establishing 5 safe spaces for women and girls.



*A few days ago, Madalina, 18, put on her volunteer vest & decided to help refugees from Ukraine. (Photo: UN Women Moldova)*

### Communication with communities

- In support of the efforts by Government to **raise awareness amongst the refugees from Ukraine**, Partners produced information material explaining the basics of the asylum procedure, support services, reagency helpline, in Ukrainian, Russian and English. UN printed 44,000 information leaflet, UNHCR partner CDA developed a guide for refugees, IOM produced 70,000 information leaflets, UNFPA distributed information material at BCP and 80 refugee accommodation shelters; UNICEF printed 40,000 information leaflets on child protection and nutrition.
- **UNDP and UNHCR are supporting the Single Centre for Crisis Management** in the areas of data management and crisis strategic communications, for a period of six months.

### Accommodation

- As of 11 March, 93 centres authorized by the Government to host refugees were functional - capacity of 8,636, occupied at 56% (4,848 individuals). Many of the most at-risk persons have gone. However, many other refugees are currently staying in hotels or rented accommodation where prices may be increasing as supply reduces. Others are being temporally housed by Moldovans for free. Therefore, accommodation options need to be found both temporarily and, in some cases, longer-term.
- UNHCR and ACTED are working with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection and accommodation to set up a centralized data-management system to coordinate management of need assessment and assistance delivery to RACs.
- Caritas reported **activating host community** support to provide vacant properties for refugee families, and to bring such properties up to minimum standards of accommodation.
- Moldova Dorcas in collaboration with the "Titus" Christian Foundation the "Diamond" Children's Day Center provided blankets and pillows to families hosting Ukrainian refugees.



- Partners are delivering **toilets and hygiene material at border crossing points and refugee accommodation centers (RAC)**. Specifically, Action Against Hunger provided 4 bio-organic latrines, IOM supplied 3 batches of hygiene products and, UNHCR partner ACTED installed 6 toilets, and undertook regular desludging and cleaning of the toilets: Samaritan's Purse distributed hygiene kits to 1000 household in RAC, installed 12 shower units and 8 toilets in RAC.



*Women from Moldova helping women refugees from Ukraine. Meet Galina, guesthouse owner, who offers now free accommodation and warm meals to those fleeing violence. She welcomes them at her place in Palanca, close to the border crossing point, House (Photo: UNDP Moldova)*

- Caritas Moldova, in collaboration with Catholic Relief Services (CRS), is providing food and relief supplies to refugees at government-run reception centers and has established three housing centers in Chisinau.** Caritas intends to open five additional support centers.
- Action against Hunger has set up 2 kitchens in Palanca** to provide refugees in reception/waiting centers on both sides of the border with a total of 1000 hot meals for 1 week. Plan to establish two mobile kitchens on borders are in the pipeline. In addition, a baby and children's corner is setup at Palanca BCP that has provision of diapers of all sizes, wet wipes and formula milk.
- In collaboration with the **Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, World Food Programme (WFP) aims to provide food to refugees in Moldova.** In this regard, preparation is on-going and a 1200sqm warehouse in Chisinau already contracted. IOM has supplied food products at Palanca BCP.
- Partners have made available core relief items such as bedding kits, blankets, cloths, heaters, generators, and tents.** UNODC provided bedding kits (125 mattresses, 100 pillows, as well as 300 sets of bed linen); Resonance distributed 39 boxes of cloths/shoes; Charity Centre provided washing machines and cooking equipment for Refugee Accommodation centre; IOM made available 300 blankets, 28 air heaters, 15 terrace heaters, 30 raincoats and 10 electricity generators; Samaritan's Purse distributed 1000 bedding kits; UNHCR provided mushroom heaters at Palanca bus station; Action Against Hunger provided 15 heaters at Palanca refugee accommodation center.
- Partners have also distributed hygiene products and dignity kits.** UNFPA distributed 2300 dignity kits, UNICEF delivered two trucks of hygiene products at centres in Palanca and Calaraseuca and one batch to Moldexpo.
- UNHCR and IOM handed over ICT (information and communication technology) equipment to Moldovan authorities to facilitate the work of officers responding to refugee's situations.



*Volunteers serve hot food and drinks to Ukrainian refugees in Palanca, Moldova. Photo credit: Action Against Hunger/ Gonzalo Höhr.*

## Health and Nutrition

- An **Inter-agency Health working group convened a meeting on 09 March** to coordination, strengthen and expand health services for refugees. The group is co-lead by Ministry of Health and WHO. The draft of the Refugee Emergency Contingency plan was developed by the MoH and WHO and will guide the health sector response. The health system need assessment for three and six months was finalized and presented to partners.
- WHO conducted the coordination meeting of the Emergency Medical Team.
- **MSF has sent teams to the north and southeast of Moldova to assess the situation of refugees at the border crossing points.** MSF is looking at the possibility to support chronically ill patients or mental health needs.
- UNAIDS with local NGOs supported 38 refugee HIV patients from Ukraine were **provided ARV treatment**. Moldova has the capacity to cover about 300 additional patients. UNICEF and WHO are working to **promote polio and measles vaccinations** at all reception centres.
- **WHO conducted evaluation of selected districts primary health** care and hospital capacities to ensure the continuity of care.
- **Partners provided medicines, healthcare, established mobile clinics, and distributed emergency kits.** IOM delivered 1,129 boxes of medical consumable, UNFPA established 2 mobile clinics, WHO delivered non-consumable disease kits for 10,000 patients (for 3 months), WHO delivered basic Emergency kit for 10,000 patients for three months for emergency care service; IsraAID launched mobile medical clinics with Russian/ Ukrainian speaking doctors/nurses, MSF is providing basic health care consultation to refugees in Palanca. The Border Police medical service received a donation from the WHO which include essential medicines for the refugee.
- **WHO identified the following needs and 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; Government needs to be supported on readiness to roll out the vaccination programme for Polio and Measles (sufficient stock is available in Moldova); Health screening in the points of entry and refugee camp/centres; Emergency Health supplies are needed for designated hospitals by the Ministry of Health.



WHO Moldova donated essential medicines to Medical Department of the Border Police to use for the refugees needs (Photo: WHO Moldova)

### Cash based interventions

- **Provision of cash assistance in Moldova is a collaborative effort led by the Government (Minister of Labour and Social Affairs) and UNHCR, in close partnership with IOM, WFP, UNICEF, the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) and in close partnership with NGOs.** Provision of cash transfers to both refugees and the Moldovan host population, that has generously welcomed the refugees, is foreseen. UNHCR's PRIMES system will be used for the enrolment of refugees and third country nationals. It will collect biometric data and fingerprints, in line with Government's practice. Enrolment will be done with CRS/Caritas (UNHCR implementing partners). The Cash Working Group co-led by the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs and UNHCR is coordinating to streamline cash provision (harmonised grant size and targeting criteria).
- UNDP provided **direct financial support to selected Hometown Association (HTA)** for the provision of equipment and goods required for the accommodation and catering of refugees. To-date, 25 localities have been supported to organize crowdfunding and humanitarian aid collection campaigns (from

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