# UKRAINE RESPONSE SITUATION REPORT



# SITUATION OVERVIEW

# **KEY FIGURES**



110,182

Refugees from Ukraine present in the country



7,894

TCNs from Ukraine present in the country



**17,405** 

Individuals benefiting from temporary protection

Against the backdrop of the ongoing war in Ukraine throughout 2023, the demand for humanitarian assistance remains pressing in the Republic of Moldova. As the country pursues the EU accession process, IOM remains committed to addressing the evolving needs and to providing capacity-building support to the Government, while remaining flexible to adapt swiftly to shifting circumstances and displacement patterns.

In July 2023, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (MLSP) initiated the Refugee Accommodation Centre (RAC) consolidation process with the primary objective of facilitating a smooth transition and relocation of refugees to alternative housing solutions. The need to identify durable solutions for those remaining in Moldova is significant, and IOM plays an active role in supporting this strategy. IOM is involved in the Taskforce Coordination Forum and organizes informative sessions on rental assistance, job counselling, and psychosocial first aid.

During the reporting period, information sessions were organized in RACs located in Nisporeni, Balti, Copcea, and Anenii Noi, covering topics such as legal rights related to

rental contracts, contract reviews, guidance on finding shortand long-term accommodation, and job counselling sessions in close collaboration with the National Employment Agency.

The impending winter season brings forth the imperative need for coordinated winterization efforts. The Basic Needs Working Group, has established a Winterization Taskforce, collaboratively developing a <u>Sectoral Winterization Plan</u>. IOM, in partnership with UNHCR, ACTED, WFP, and DRC, has undertaken household and public infrastructure assessments to identify essential requirements and vulnerabilities, thereby informing the planning, strategies, and prioritization of the winterization activities.

Furthermore, in September 2023, the Commission on Exceptional Situations issued a decision simplifying procedures for the documentation of residence in the Republic of Moldova for purposes of obtaining Temporary Protection (TP). Under this recent decision, refugees can self-declare their residence in Moldova, and TP eligibility was extended to parents or legal representatives who are nationals of third countries other than Ukraine and who are accompanying a child otherwise eligible to TP in Moldova.

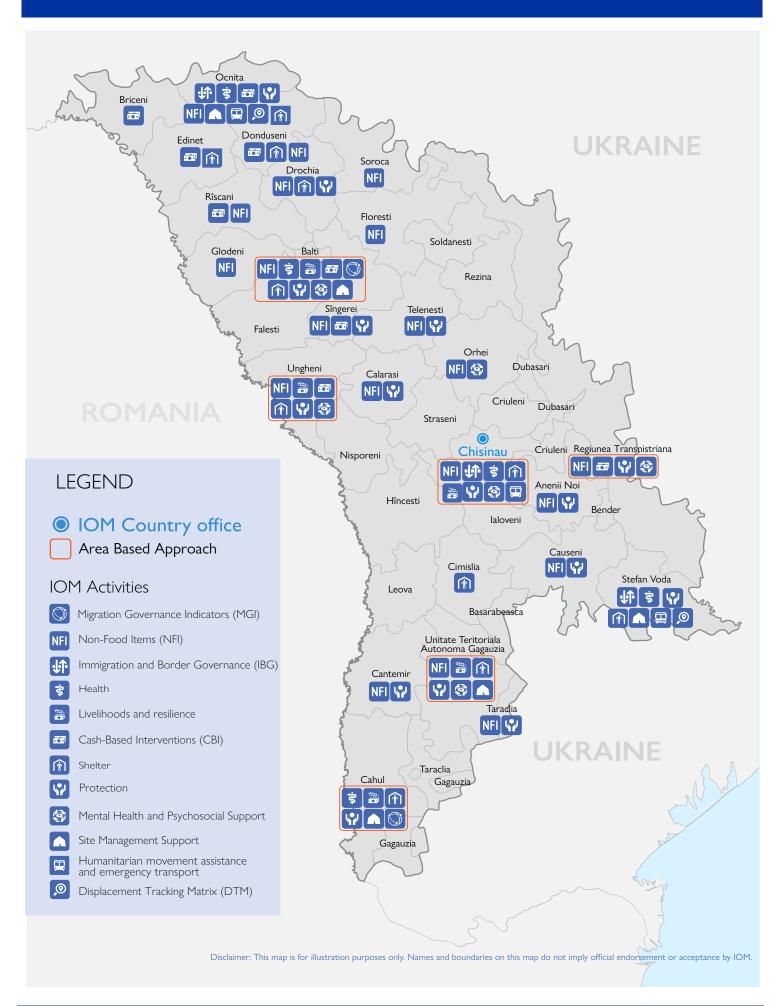
These are welcome developments that facilitate access to TP by removing major barriers as well as ensuring the right to a family unit for those displaced from Ukraine. The government showed great commitment towards these achievements while highlighting the need to continue raising awareness as well as the need for more efforts towards refugees' socio-economic integration in the country.



IOM Moldova published its report on joint Migration Governance Indicators (MGI) and Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) initiative highlighting sociodemographic characteristics, mobility, vulnerability, needs, and access to public services among migrant populations.

Read the "Joint MGI-DTM Initiative"

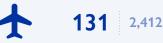
# AS OF 30 SEPTEMBER 2023



# **ACHIEVEMENTS DURING JULY-SEPTEMBER** AND CUMULATIVE SINCE FEBRUARY 2022

# **HUMANITARIAN TRANSPORT ASSISTANCE**

AIR TRANSFERS OF REFUGEES TO EU MEMBER STATES OR ASSOCIATED COUNTRIES



**GROUND TRANSPORT FOR** REFUGEES TO ROMANIA

16,319

ASSISTED VOLUNTARY RETURN OF THIRD-COUNTRY NATIONALS (TCNS 365 2,311

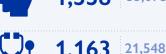
### **HEALTH**

MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT, SOCIO-RECREATIONAL **ACTIVITIES, MENTAL HEALTH** SPECIALIZED SERVICES, AND TRAININGS

1.558 33,078

PRE-DEPARTURE MEDICAL ASSISTANCE FOR REFUGEES AND TCNS

PEOPLE ASSISTED WITH MEDICAL CARE AND TREATMENT (CANCER AND DIALYSIS)



# **PROTECTION**

PEOPLE ASSISTED WITH SOCIAL, LEGAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSISTANCE, INFORMATION, AND REFERRALS



1,026 19,119

1.043

136

### **IMMIGRATION AND BORDER GOVERNANCE**

CAPACITY BUILDING FOR NATIONAL 396 **AUTHORITIES** MOBILE PHONES DELIVERED TO THE 60 170 **NATIONAL AUTHORITIES** 

**DOCUMENT READING DEVICES DELIVERED TO THE NATIONAL AUTHORITIES** 

LEGEND: During the reporting period (July-September) Cumulative since February 2022



### SHELTER AND NON-FOOD ITEMS

RENTAL ASSISTANCE TO AFFECTED PEOPLE



779

1.859

### **CASH-BASED INTERVENTIONS**

MULTI-PURPOSE CASH ASSISTANCE TO AFFECTED PEOPLE



**2.043** 3,623

**LIVELIHOODS** 

PEOPLE RECEIVED CASH FOR SKILLS TRAININGS AND MICRO-GRANTS



323

# **ACCOUNTABILITY TO AFFECTED POPULATIONS**

PEOPLE ASSISTED WITH INFORMATION AND REFERRALS THROUGH INFO CENTRES IN BALTI, COMRAT AND CAHUL



1,180

4.637

PEOPLE ASSISTED WITH INFORMATION AND REFERRALS THROUGH IOM TOLL-FREE CALL CENTRE



2.020

5,218

# PREVENTION OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION, ABUSE, **AND HARASSMENT (PSEAH)**

**HUMANITARIAN WORKERS AND** NATIONAL AUTHORITIES RECEIVED PSEAH TRAININGS



103

783

## DISPLACEMENT TRACKING MATRIX

RETURN INTENTION SURVEYS WITH REFUGEES ON DESTINATIONS. LENGHT OF STAY AND ASSISTANCE



3.309

14,811

# WATER, SANITATION, AND HYGIENE (WASH)

PUMPING STATION INSTALLED AT THE BORDER CROSSING POINTS



# SHELTER/NON-FOOD ITEMS (NFI)

During the reporting period, a total of 779 individuals received support through monthly rental payments, in line with the RAC Consolidation Strategy. To support the Government's contingency planning efforts, IOM has prepositioned essential items in warehouses as a preparedness measure for rapid emergency response, including 5,327 winter blankets, 1,000 hygiene kits, 2,000 bedding sets, 500 kitchen sets and 200 kits for people with disability. As a part of the Interagency Winterization Strategy, IOM is actively engaged in supporting local communities through public infrastructure building renovations. As a result, assessments for the rehabilitation of two buildings in Comrat and Donduseni have been completed, with renovations scheduled for completion by May 2024. Additionally, IOM partnered with Habitat for Humanity to perform a housing ecosystem assessment to identify suitable solutions for affordable housing in the country.

As a result, the first stage of the assessment has been completed, stakeholders have been identified, and grounds have been set for the second stage.





# WATER, SANITATION, AND HYGIENE (WASH)

In Otaci, a town situated on the border with Ukraine and hosting a significant number of refugees, IOM identified critical issues with the water supply infrastructure, where a pumping station was in dire need of upgrades. The outdated pumping station not only consumed excessive electricity but also frequently led to water shortages. Following technical evaluations and expert consultations, a comprehensive equipment overhaul was executed. This included the installation of new equipment and advanced control panels, which reduced the risk of future breakdowns and significantly improved energy efficiency.



# LIVELIHOODS, SOCIAL COHESION, AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

A total of 12 focus group discussions were conducted with Ukrainian refugees and Moldovan host communities in Cahul, Comrat, Balti, and Chisinau to identify the challenges faced regarding access to employment, health care, and social protection benefits. IOM Moldova facilitated ten local public events in various locations, including Chisinau (such as Vyshniyanka Day, Yard Sales, and Refugee Day), Balt (Refugee Day), and Cahul (International Children's Day, Arts Day, and Ukrainian Day), to foster mutual engagement and cross-cultural learning that are instrumental in building an integrated community. To further equip affected people with the tools needed for integration and self-reliance, IOM has been implementing dedicated programming focused on promoting community resilience, social

cohesion, and sustainable livelihoods. During the reporting period, cash assistance for skills training was provided to 85 individuals. Additionally, a total of 54 people received cash for microgrants to procure equipment and materials for self-employment.

# **PROTECTION**

IOM remains committed to comprehensive protection by integrating protective considerations across all sectors and providing vital support, including social and psychological assistance, information dissemination, and legal assistance, with special attention to supporting refugees accessing applications and information on temporary protection status as well as TCNs to legal migration pathways on both banks of the Nistru River. To strengthen the protection response of various organizations, capacity-building initiatives were implemented. These initiatives included training for 66 staff members from the IOM Implementing Partners (IPs) and 14 IOM staff on the identification of victims of trafficking and effective data collection. Additionally, 59 frontline workers from Intersos and ACTED underwent training with a specific emphasis on preventinghuman trafficking through comprehensive detection measures. An awareness-raising and informational session took place in two northern regions. This session empowered local community



representatives and Roma community mediators and leaders in Soroca through training on preventing trafficking-related risks and gender-based violence.



# **HEALTH**

IOM remains steadfast in its commitment to ensuring the health and safety of people residing near the BCPs, where the mobile medical team offers primary health care and medical assistance to both Ukrainian residents and the local community. During the reporting period, a total of 261 individuals received assistance at the Palanca BCP, and 519 individuals were assisted at the Otaci BCP. While prioritizing immediate needs, IOM is dedicated to strengthening institutions for sustainable access to essential healthcare. In August, IOM donated 300 portable medical refrigerators to the National Centre for Prehospital Emergency Medical Assistance, enhancing medical supply storage and transport efficiency. Vital medical equipment, including an endocavitary probe and a needle guide, was also provided to the Oncology Institute of Moldova, enhancing its capabilities in oncology diagnostics and treatment. IOM continues to cover health services through the National Health Insurance Company and the Oncology Institute, encompassing emergency healthcare, urgent

hospital care, dialysis services, and cancer care and treatment for Ukrainian refugees and TCNs. Furthermore, IOM's Chief of Mission solidified collaborative healthcare initiatives and partnerships by signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Health. Additionally, the team initiated the second phase of the Vaccine Confidence and Demand Project, with the primary aim of increasing vaccination awareness and delivering reliable information to refugees, migrants, asylum seekers, and TCNs.

# MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT (MHPSS)

During the reporting period, IOM's MHPSS team organized events enhancing relational skills, leadership, and the overall well-being of participants: a ten-day summer camp for Ukrainian children in the Transnistrian region, an International Youth Day event in Ungheni involving over 500 youth, and a painting event in Chirsova village where around 100 individuals left their mark on the canvas. IOM continues to work in partnership with the Mental Health Community Centre to offer psychiatric consultation, crisis interventions, sheltered housing, group placement, and addiction recovery programs. This agreement aims to increase access to mental well-being and support for refugees, migrants, and atrisk populations, including host communities. Moreover, by signing a Memorandum of Understanding in September with the Continuous Training and Leadership Centre of "Ion Creanga" Pedagogical State University, IOM started providing daily MHPSS initiatives at the RAC "Doina." These initiatives encompass psychological assistance, psychosocial arts, and social-relational activities designed to benefit refugees, migrants, mobile populations, and vulnerable or affected groups.



# A family from Odesa is preparing to fly to Bordeaux with their dog. © IOM 2023

# **HUMANITARIAN MOVEMENT**

Since the onset of the war and in line with the organisation's humanitarian movement guidelines, IOM has supported those fleeing the war by providing information and assistance for Ukrainian refugees in coordination with UNHCR, seeking relocation to EU member states and associated countries, as well as facilitating voluntary humanitarian returns for TCNs to their countries of origin. During the reporting period, 131 Ukrainian refugees were successfully transferred from the Republic of Moldova to Switzerland (74), Norway (42), the Netherlands (6), Austria (4), Ireland (4), and Liechtenstein (1). A total of 365 TCNs and 111 Ukrainian nationals (spouses and children of the TCNs) were assisted to safely return to Azerbaijan (403), Tajikistan (29), Turkmenistan (18), Georgia (11), Uzbekistan (4), Armenia (3), Nepal (2), Nigeria (2), Türkiye (2), Belarus (1), and Kazakhstan (1). Moreover, the movement of refugees through ground transportation was facilitated. A total of 509 refugees were assisted in their journey from Palanca BCP to Romania, and an additional 50 refugees from Otaci BCP to Romania. The IOM team

has been on-site, providing essential information regarding onward travel arrangements and the provision of accommodation while TCNs are transiting in the Republic of Moldova. To ensure the health and safety of refugees and TCNs throughout their travels, pre-departure health assistance was provided to 1,105 Ukrainian refugees and TCNs.

# **CASH-BASED INTERVENTIONS (CBI)**

IOM provides essential Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA) to Ukrainian refugees currently residing in the Transnistrian region, mirroring the support refugees receive on the right bank of the river to address their critical needs. In its commitment to transparent and accountable aid delivery, IOM conducts registration exercises for all eligible individuals seeking MPCA assistance. During the reporting period, a total of 2,043 individuals received MPCA in the Transnistrian region. Additionally, to enhance communications with affected populations and raise awareness, an information session was organised in the Transnistrian region, addressing the registration process of the MPCA, roles and responsibilities, and facilitating Q&A.



# Enhancing Humanitarian Support to Vulnerable and Conflict-Affected Communities and Local Authorities in the Republic of Moldova Handover of rugged smartphones to GIBP. © IOM 2023

# **IMMIGRATION AND BORDER GOVERNANCE**

In July, IOM presented a comprehensive report on the legal identity system in the Republic of Moldova to the representatives of relevant national authorities, UN agencies, and NGOs. In August, as part of the efforts to enhance the preparedness and response capabilities of the Moldovan state authorities in emergency and crisis situations, 16 travel document reading devices were donated to the General Inspectorate of Border Police (GIBP) to facilitate safe and efficient border-crossing processes. Additionally, 60 rugged mobile phones were supplied to support the implementation of the new border access management system, E-Permis, to enhance border security. Moreover, IOM delivered office equipment to the General Inspectorate for Migration (GIM) to support the work of the hotline operators and contracted seven operational consultants to address a total of 79,783 calls through the GIM hotline. To enhance effective communication,

mitigate burnout risks, and improve emergency response capabilities, IOM conducted a Training of Trainers (ToT) program on professional communications in a multicultural environment and stress management, benefiting a group of 12 psychologist trainers and 35 officers from the General Inspectorate of Police, Customs Service, and GIBP. Starting in August, the works for the implementation of the Video Control System (VICOS) concept started with the deployment of CCTV/ANPR infrastructure and equipment at the Criva, Otaci, and Palanca BCPs.

# **DISPLACEMENT TRACKING MATRIX**

During the reporting period, IOM conducted surveys with Ukrainian refugees and TCNs returning to Ukraine from BCPs in Otaci and Palanca in order to monitor their **profiles**, **displacement patterns**, **and immediate needs**. The DTM team is currently dedicated to analysing and compiling data related to these return journeys. Key preliminary findings include:

- Out of the **2,901 respondents** (2,855 Ukrainian citizens, 46 TCNS), 94 per cent were women and six per cent were men.
- A total of 61 per cent (1,761 respondents) were travelling in a group. Out of these **1,761** respondents, eight per cent were with infants (0–4 years old) and children (5–17 years old), while 21 per cent were travelling with elderly persons (over 60 years old).
- Some of the main reasons for returning to Ukraine were to meet with family (22%), check on their properties, and obtain or renew documents (11% each).
- A total of 60 per cent of respondents had received humanitarian assistance outside of Ukraine, which includes food (29%), financial support (28%), and hygiene items (22%). Lower shares received support in the form of vouchers (8%), accommodation, clothes, transport, and psychosocial support.



# ACCOUNTABILITY TO AFFECTED POPULATIONS (AAP)

During the reporting period, the IOM AAP team has been actively involved in **information dissemination** to affected populations residing in the country. The team conducted an **AAP training** session for seven staff from the Church Relief Services' information centre in Balti. Additionally, information sessions were held in Drochia, Ocnita, and Tiraspol on the available assistance provided by IOM to affected people. To engage with community members and understand their needs, an **#askiom Telegram live session** was organized. The majority of questions received during the session included the distribution of vouchers for food and clothing, livelihood trainings, and an overview of the available projects for Ukrainian citizens. The **toll-free call centre at 080010877** remains the key referral, feedback, and complaint tool. The majority of inquiries were related to rental assistance, cash assistance, and legal assistance.





# PROTECTION FROM SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE (PSEA)

IOM places a strong emphasis on capacity building and awareness to effectively address incidents of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) among its staff, partners, and government officials. In pursuit of this objective, training sessions were conducted for 57 humanitarian workers and 46 government officials, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of PSEA policies, available reporting channels, and victims' assistance. IOM is investing in the capacity building of its partners and has organized the first two full-day workshops in the Republic of Moldova for the realization of PSEA policies, protection against retaliation, and standards of conduct for eight implementing partners represented by directors, lawyers, and policy specialists, and one full-day workshop for an implementing partner in the Transnistrian region. IOM is committed, along with other UN

agencies, to jointly address SEA risks and has delivered an interagency ToT for local partners on the newly developed IOM PSEA ToT package through regional synergy. The package alternates sessions on facilitation skills with sessions on PSEA and includes comprehensive facilitating guidelines. In order to ensure gender equality and prevent and combat sexual exploitation, harassment, and abuse at work, the GIBP, in collaboration with the IOM, has initiated the development of the first training course dedicated to border police officers. Reports from staff and affected people can be directed to the IOM official platform, weareallin.iom.int, or they can contact pseahmoldova@iom.int or the official PSEA telephone number, +373 60411348, for consultation or assistance. Moreover, they can reach the IOM call centre, where trained staff members equipped to address sensitive complaints will refer the report to the appropriate internal channels.

The story of Angela and Anastasia, Ukrainian sisters living in the Republic of Moldova after fleeing the war in Ukraine, who fulfilled their wish to open a beauty salon with the support of IOM's Livelihoods Program and the support of their grandmother.

Anastasia and Angela, two sisters from Odesa, Ukraine, share a profound passion for the beauty industry. Anastasia refined her skills while working in beauty salons, discovering her passion for eyebrow styling, while Angela has had a lifelong goal of becoming a hairdresser.

On 24 February 2022, under the Odessa sky lit by the explosions of the Russian missiles, the two sisters got into a car and headed towards the border of the Republic of Moldova together with their family.

The transition to a new life was far from easy. Local mistrust made it challenging for them to find work in beauty salons, no one seemed to want to rely on two Ukrainian refugee girls who had just fled a war.

Encouraged by the IOM Moldova's Livelihoods team and support from the United States Bureau for Population, Refugee, and Migration, and their grandmother, they opened the "Dusha" ("soul" in Ukrainian) salon, which has been successfully running since January 2023. This story shows



the resilience of Anastasia and Angela, who turned adversity into an opportunity, creating not just a beauty salon but a refuge for the soul—Dusha.

# IOM'S WORK IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA IS SUPPORTED BY:









Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs













