UKRAINE RESPONSE: COUNTER TRAFFICKING
6 MAY 2022 - 14 JUNE 2022

OVERVIEW

There is broad consensus that crisis situations exacerbate the risk of human trafficking and may give rise to new trends in trafficking as opportunists seek to exploit vulnerabilities of people impacted by instability and displacement. Trafficking was already a phenomenon of concern in Ukraine and surrounding countries prior to the invasion of the country by the Russian Federation on 24 February 2022. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is deeply concerned about the reported increase in human trafficking and exploitation. The majority of those fleeing Ukraine since the start of the crisis are women and children. In addition to human trafficking, key protection concerns include family separation, exposure to violence, exploitation and abuse, and subjection to trauma, gender-based violence, and sexual exploitation.

1. DIRECT ASSISTANCE

To ensure needs are addressed and people have access to timely and quality care, IOM offers comprehensive direct assistance packages to victims of trafficking in collaboration with our partners. During the reporting period, the following assistance was provided by IOM Country Offices:

**IOM Belarus:** IOM is conducting rapid vulnerability screenings, identification, and referrals of vulnerable individuals, including victims of trafficking. As of 3 June, the needs of 243 Ukrainian refugees were assessed. Main needs identified were food and hygiene items, clothing, and medicines. Through the established protection referral pathways, IOM has been supporting refugees from Ukraine with employment in Belarus, protecting them from labour exploitation. Assistance includes micro-business/entrepreneurship courses, assistance with payment of special employment permits and legal assistance.

**IOM Czechia:** IOM established an information helpline that provides legal counselling and support to potential victims of trafficking and exploitation in Ukrainian, Czech, English and Russian. So far, the helpline has assisted 54 persons with services including psycho-social assistance, health referrals and legal assistance.

**IOM Greece:** IOM provides targeted information on safe migration, employment and labour rights in Greece, as well as hotlines available to Ukrainians arriving in Greece and residing in open accommodation sites. IOM also conducts vulnerability and needs assessments for arriving populations, alongside psychological support and group activities focusing on the empowerment of women to cope with stress, anxiety symptoms, sleep disorder and PTSD.

**IOM Moldova:** IOM assists Ukrainian victims of trafficking stranded in third countries (i.e. Burundi). IOM is supporting transportation, accommmodation and provision of comprehensive assistance at the Chisinau Centre for Protection and Assistance.

**IOM Romania:** IOM provides safe transport, shelter and accommodation for victims of trafficking who may be identified at border crossing points, transit centers and other locations. IOM Romania also works closely with specialized Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) to provide comprehensive support services to victims, including psychosocial support, health referrals, education and language courses; cash assistance, employment support, etc.

**IOM Poland:** IOM provided safe accommodation to a Ukrainian victim of trafficking stranded in a third country. The victim identified has been offered physiological, legal and in-kind assistance.
IOM Ukraine: IOM assisted 10 victims of trafficking (eight men and two women) and 10 migrants particularly vulnerable to human trafficking (three men and seven women). All beneficiaries received individual-based assistance, which included family and housing allowance, medical assistance, transportation support, and other protection services. IOM also provided income-generating professional equipment to support them and their families.

2. THEMATIC GUIDANCE

IOM provides thematic guidance to various stakeholders, including by establishing standards on counter trafficking approaches, and providing technical support to Member States in developing their own policies and guidelines, in adherence with appropriate international legal frameworks and standards. During the reporting period the following initiative was implemented:

IOM Poland: IOM has launched a counter trafficking project, which aims to tackle labour exploitation and other forms of human trafficking. The project is implemented in partnership with the Polish Border Guard and consists of various capacity building initiatives focusing on law enforcement actors and migrant community organizations.

3. CONVENING & DIALOGUE

IOM works in partnership with governments, the United Nations system, international and non-governmental organizations, civil society actors, the private sector and development partners on all aspects of counter trafficking responses – prevention, protection, prosecution and partnerships. As part of this approach, the following initiatives took place during the reporting period:

IOM Belarus: IOM participates in the bi-weekly meetings of the UN Belarus Refugee Coordination Forum. This working group serves as a springboard for coordination of the Ukraine response and knowledge sharing and address various topics including human trafficking.

IOM Bulgaria: On 13 May 2022, IOM participated in a monthly meeting with National Authorities and NGOs to discuss identification and prevention of human trafficking cases involving Ukrainian nationals.

IOM Czechia: IOM takes part in weekly inter-agency coordination meetings with UNHCR, UNICEF and WHO. IOM also takes part in the bi-weekly meetings of the national protection working group. On 20 May 2022, IOM met representatives of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and Labour Inspectorates and discussed possibility of mutual collaboration to prevent labour exploitation. In addition, on 25 May 2022, IOM met with the Director of Population Protection and Crisis Management division of the National Centre for Assistance to Ukraine (NACPU) and explored possible cooperation on shelter for vulnerable people fleeing Ukraine.

IOM Croatia: On 19 May 2022, IOM had a meeting with the representatives of the Department for International Cooperation of US Embassy in Croatia to explore mutual cooperation in combating human trafficking.

IOM France: IOM is participating in the weekly meetings of the national working group on the protection of Ukrainian nationals, led by UNHCR and the French Authorities. This working group allows for sharing of updates on the reception of people fleeing Ukraine and trends and challenges faced by frontline workers.
4. ADVOCACY & COMMUNICATIONS

Through information campaigns and outreach initiatives, IOM seeks to equip vulnerable populations with the information they need to migrate safely and access assistance when necessary. IOM also aims to address the root causes of vulnerability to trafficking through the implementation of programs targeting not only the individual but also the household, community, and structural levels. Some examples of activities implemented during the reporting period are available below:

**IOM Moldova:** On 18 May 2022, IOM met with UNHCR to discuss the establishment of a Counter Trafficking Task Force serving as a platform for coordination of the counter trafficking emergency response.

**IOM Ukraine:** On 24 May 2022, IOM co-chaired together with La Strada-Ukraine the inaugural meeting of the Anti-Trafficking Task Team, which will be held monthly under the Protection Cluster of the Ukraine Humanitarian Response.

**IOM Poland:** On 16 May 2022, IOM held a meeting with the Head of Department of International Cooperation and Migration at the Ministry of Interior, to discuss IOM’s activities in counter trafficking, humanitarian transportation, and Cash-Based Interventions. IOM has also signed a project implementation agreement with the Central Roma Council focusing on the provision of direct assistance and cultural mediation to Roma refugees from Ukraine.

**IOM Ukraine & Poland:** On 18 May 2022, together with La Strada and Revival of the Nation, held a briefing for the members of the US Congress (Women, Peace, and Security Caucus) on human trafficking in the context of the Ukraine crisis.

**IOM Romania:** Together with proTECT platform, a consortium of 22 NGOs specialized in counter trafficking, IOM has established and co-chairs the Crisis Response Anti-Trafficking Task Force (CRATTF) under the Refugee Coordination Framework. Under CRATTF, IOM is conducting a Rapid mapping of counter trafficking activities and interventions in Romania.

**IOM Slovakia:** On 25 May 2022 IOM chaired the Task Force on human trafficking organized jointly with UNHCR and the Ministry of Interior of Slovakia in order to support coordinated action to address risks of human trafficking and ensure respect for victims’ rights.

**IOM Switzerland:** On 12 May 2022, IOM organized the second coordination meeting on human trafficking, involving 18 governmental and non-governmental institutions as well as a Ukrainian diaspora organization to discuss prevention of human trafficking, exploitation and gender-based violence related to people fleeing Ukraine.

**IOM Belarus:** IOM is raising awareness on safe migration pathways and human trafficking protection measures through the IOM supported hotline. To date, the hotline has provided consultations to 311 migrants. In addition, 6,000 leaflets featuring information on support services for trafficking survivors have been produced and distributed among government agencies and NGOs across Belarus.

**IOM Czechia:** IOM has started a counter trafficking campaign on social media to raise awareness among people fleeing Ukraine on the risks of human trafficking.

**IOM France:** IOM produced an information leaflet to be distributed amongst volunteers who are in contact with people fleeing the war in Ukraine. The leaflet details the definition of human trafficking and lists frontline organizations which are able to identify and support victims of trafficking.

**IOM Germany:** In collaboration with Hilfetelefon and KOK, IOM developed a flyer on the risks Ukrainians may face to human trafficking, sexual exploitation and abuse and gender-based violence. Twelve thousand flyers have been printed in English, German, Russian, and Ukrainian, with 9,500 having so far been distributed to federal ministries, journalists, counselling centres, and to migrants directly.
5. TRAINING & CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

IOM provides essential information, DTM, toys for children, and information advising refugees and TCNs on the potential risks of trafficking that can occur for those planning to take further transportation to other neighboring countries. ©IOM/Mohammed

The flyer was also adapted by the Bundespolizei into a poster and brochure, shared on the Deutsche Bahn info portal, and shown on the Berlin underground information service. The material was posted on social media and reached approximately 450,000 users.

IOM Germany also produced a flyer on finding decent work and the dangers of labour exploitation in Ukrainian, Russian, English and German, in cooperation with ILO and the German Federal Employment Agency. The material is being disseminated broadly.

IOM Malta: IOM shared information on IOM’s efforts in relation to the Ukraine response, including details on IOM’s hotlines with the Non-Resident Ambassadors to Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Ukraine to Malta, as well as the NGO Migrants Commission,

IOM Moldova: Mobile teams have worked throughout May to raise awareness of refugees and third country nationals (TCNs) on human trafficking and on the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration program offered by IOM to TCNs fleeing Ukraine. Throughout May, the teams reached 780 persons.

IOM Ukraine & Poland: Staff gave an interview for the online TV platform for Ukrainians fleeing the war and currently residing in Poland (www.ua24.tv) on trafficking related risks and assistance available to vulnerable persons. Different counter trafficking information materials have been developed and handed over to border guard local offices. In addition, IOM continued distributing leaflets among refugees from Ukraine.

IOM Ukraine: In May 2022 IOM provided 16,511 consultations in response to 4,444 calls received through the National Toll-Free Counter-Trafficking and Migrant Advice Hotline 527. In cooperation with the Delegation of the European Union to Ukraine, IOM launched a nationwide trafficking prevention information campaign to raise awareness among Ukrainians fleeing the war. The campaign has reached 9.9 million Ukrainians so far with trafficking prevention messages. IOM also distributed over 178,000 leaflets and posters on safe migration and trafficking prevention among IDPs and populations affected by hostilities and contributed to a series of trafficking awareness videos for the online TV platform for Ukrainians residing in Poland (https://www.ua24.tv).

IOM Sweden: IOM shared with the Swedish Gender Equality Agency (GEA) information on IOM’s helpline to support Ukrainians. Information is now available on the GEA website.

IOM Austria: On 9 May 2022, IOM published practical tools for frontline responders to identify and prevent human trafficking in the context of the Ukraine crisis: (1) Indicators for human trafficking in the context of arrivals from Ukraine, and (2) Preventing human trafficking in private accommodation. Both documents were jointly developed with the Austrian criminal police and victim protection organizations and will be regularly updated based on ongoing observations.

IOM Belarus: In June 2022, IOM has been delivering protection trainings across the cities of Belarus. The trainings were focusing on how to identify and refer potential victims of human trafficking and survivors of gender-based violence.
6. DATA, RESEARCH & LEARNING

IOM is committed to strengthening the evidence base on trafficking in order to understand its root causes and combat this crime. Through its programming responses, IOM collects data on human trafficking and associated forms of exploitation and abuse in situations of humanitarian crisis, displacement, and large-scale migration. During the reporting period, the following developments took place in this field:

**IOM Czechia:** IOM developed a data collection mechanism on the protection needs of Ukrainian nationals and TCNs fleeing Ukraine. Data collection began in June 2022.

**IOM Germany:** IOM launched a digital survey for TCNs with diaspora organizations, civil society and embassies. The survey aims to identify the needs and vulnerabilities of TCN, including to human trafficking, gender-based violence and xenophobia.

**IOM Poland & Belarus:** As part of its Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), IOM is conducting questionnaires to collect data on the protection needs of Ukrainian refugees and TCNs. Data collected will inform IOM's counter trafficking programming.

**IOM Romania:** IOM has conducted over 5,311 interviews since 25 March 2022 to track displacement patterns and protection needs. IOM also conducted local assessment on the risks of trafficking at Border Crossing Points, Reception Centres and other key locations in Romania.

**IOM Ukraine:** IOM has finalized the methodology of a rapid national survey which will estimate the level of vulnerability of the Ukrainian population to human trafficking, gender-based violence and exploitation. The survey will be rolled out in June 2022.

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**IOM Bulgaria:** On 11 May 2022, IOM conducted a coordination meeting/training on the prevention of human trafficking among people arriving from Ukraine. Representatives of the local anti-trafficking commission, city administration, police and volunteers took an active part in the meeting.

**IOM Poland:** On 23 May 2022, IOM conducted a training for 37 Border Guard Officers on counter trafficking. In addition, a two-day training for Roma cultural mediators was held in Warsaw on 30-31 May, focusing on counter trafficking, child protection and identification of Roma in vulnerable situations.

**IOM Portugal:** On 3 and 7 June 2022, IOM organized two information sessions, in partnership with UNHCR, for local municipalities that have been involved in assisting people who have fled Ukraine since February. These sessions took place online, with 117 registered participants, and addressed protection themes, such as: assessing vulnerabilities and referrals, risks of human trafficking, psychosocial approach, the work of volunteers, and protection in humanitarian work.

**IOM Romania:** Between 6-8 June 2022, IOM and UNHCR delivered protection trainings to 68 National child protection workers (DGASCP), social workers and volunteers in the counties of Vaslui and Lasi. As part of the training IOM delivered a specific session on identifying victims of trafficking and referring cases under Romania’s national referral mechanism.

**IOM Slovakia:** On 12 May 2022, IOM conducted an awareness raising and orientation event on safe employment and prevention of human trafficking. This event was part of regular meetings organised by the NGO Mareena and the municipality of Bratislava.