

HIGHLIGHTS

According to IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), as of 5 August, there are approximately **7,211 Ukrainian refugees and 1,121 third country nationals (TCNs)** present in Belarus.

Since the start of the war, IOM has provided humanitarian assistance to **1,177 persons** fleeing Ukraine and protection assistance to **113 Ukraine nationals and 8 TCNs**.

Since 24 February, the IOM-supported hotline on safe migration and combatting human trafficking received over **1,039 requests** (29 per cent of the total number of queries) concerning migration issues and assistance available in Belarus for refugees and TCNs fleeing Ukraine .

In 2022, IOM Belarus provided voluntary return assistance to a total of **593 migrants**.

SITUATION OVERVIEW

Since 24 February, 55,998 Ukrainian nationals have entered Belarus, as reported by the [State Border Committee of Belarus](#). On 28 September, the Department of Citizenship and Migration, within the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Belarus, [announced](#) that they have processed over 5,800 applications for Belarusian citizenship from Ukrainian nationals, with some 4,900 requests already approved.

According to the assessments within IOM's DTM report, as of 5 August, there are 7,211 Ukrainian refugees and 1,121 TCNs remaining in the territory of Belarus. The DTM report, published on 13 September, identified the **main needs of Ukrainian refugees** to be **financial support, food supplies, hygiene items, clothes and shoes, information provision, health services, assistance with documentation, medicine, employment and long-term accommodation**.



Tatsiana, refugee from Mariupol, walks around Vitebsk—Belarusian city she currently resides in © IOM 2022

On 14 September, decree number 420 *“On the Stay of Citizens of Ukraine in the Republic of Belarus”* was revised to exempt Ukrainian nationals from paying state fees for a temporary residence permit, application for a permanent residence, and a biometric residence permit. Employers of the Republic of Belarus who employ Ukrainian citizens are now exempt from paying state taxes for the special permit for the right to employment; the permit to employ foreign labor; and a one-time extension of permits to attract foreign labor to the country. In addition, the decree grants Ukrainian citizens rights on an equal footing with Belarusian citizens, including access to preschool, general and vocational education; affordable medical care; allowances for children; and pensions. It is expected that the decree will facilitate the integration of Ukrainian citizens into Belarusian society and will ensure the prompt settlement of issues regarding their social support and labor activities.

CONTACTS

CURRENT RESPONSE ACTIVITIES

IOM staff continue to support migrants and refugees in Belarus through various activities, including vulnerability screenings, referrals and assistance provision across Belarus with presence in five out of six regions of the country – Minsk, Gomel, Mogilev, Vitebsk and Brest.

In the reporting period, 468 people approached IOM for assistance. This brings **the total number of people who approached IOM for support** since the start of the war to **1,221 individuals**. IOM screened these individuals for potential vulnerabilities, conducted needs assessments, and provided or planned for necessary assistance.

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

During the reporting period, 257 beneficiaries received several forms of humanitarian assistance from IOM. In total, since IOM established a system of direct assistance provision to refugees and migrants fleeing Ukraine in mid-May, the organization has assisted 1,177 people through several forms of humanitarian aid.

Type of assistance	Number of beneficiaries reached during the reporting period (3—30 September)	Total number of beneficiaries since the start of the war
Food items	199	848
Hygiene items	199	848
Non-food items (clothes, footwear, school kits, household items)	66	262
Accommodation support	6	19
Transportation support	15	30
Vouchers for medicine	92	240
Medication	16	35
Referral to medical institutions	7	21
Psychosocial support	14	77
Psychological consultations	7	37
Counselling support, referral to other institutions for case management	17	135

Within the Ukraine response, IOM has paid particular attention to the **psychological state** of people fleeing the war. An IOM psychologist works with refugees and TCNs in need of such assistance. IOM provides two types of services: **psychosocial support**, in the form of a 15 to 30 minute conversation with individuals for emotional feedback and support, and **psychological consultations**, which take up to an hour and provide more in-depth support. The main issues experienced by beneficiaries include grief from the war and the death of family and friends; loss of a familiar lifestyle, housing, and connections; fear and uncertainty about the future; and symptoms of depression.

During the reporting period, IOM provided shelter support, food and hygiene kits for up to 20 vulnerable migrants on average daily.



Boxes and bags with humanitarian assistance for refugees and migrants consisting of food and non-food items © IOM 2022

PROTECTION

In addition to humanitarian assistance, IOM also supports refugees and migrants fleeing Ukraine with protection assistance, including securing employment in Belarus and the voluntary return of TCNs to their countries of origin.

In the reporting period, 17 persons were assisted with the payment of employment-related translations, certified by a notary; 1 person was assisted with a medical check-up; and 8 beneficiaries started vocational training in driving, pre-school education, dog grooming, real estate, and accounting.

In total, since mid-May, 113 people have benefitted from IOM's employment facilitation and legal aid services:

- IOM paid the state fees for 26 employment permits;
- 65 people received employment-related assistance and legal aid (payment for services);
- 3 persons were assisted with medical check-ups for employment;
- 19 individuals were assisted through IOM sponsorship for vocational training.

IOM assists migrants, including those who used to live in Ukraine and fled the war, with **return to their countries of origin** in a safe and dignified way. IOM Belarus is currently activating its voluntary return and reintegration (AVRR) programme to assist vulnerable migrants.

From 3 to 30 September, voluntary return assistance was provided to four TCNs from Ukraine (to Tajikistan and Chad) in addition to seven vulnerable migrants from Cuba and Iraq who were stranded in Belarus. IOM Belarus provided these individuals with accommodation, food and hygiene items as well as medical aid, where needed.

Overall, in 2022, IOM Belarus provided assistance with voluntary return to 593 persons. The beneficiaries have returned to 31 countries of origin, including Iraq, Cuba, Sri Lanka and others. Among these people, there are eight TCNs who used to live in Ukraine and had to flee after the start of the full-scale war.

COOPERATION WITH PARTNERS

IOM's NGO partner, the Belarusian Movement of Medical Workers (BMMW), has provided 81 consultations for beneficiaries and 71 referrals to IOM for further humanitarian and protection assistance.

IOM continued to carry out its **DTM activities** together with partners – Belarusian Red Cross and Ministry of Interior. On 13 September, the final report of the first phase of the DTM was published. Its results suggest that there are approximately 7,211 Ukrainian refugees and 1,121 TCNs in Belarus. Ukrainian nationals come principally from the Donetsk region, but also from Luhansk, Kharkiv, Kyiv, Chernihiv and other regions of Ukraine. Almost half of them entered Belarus directly from Ukraine, 33 per cent from Poland, 19 per cent from the Russian Federation, and less than 1 per cent from Lithuania and Latvia. Most of the Ukrainians in Belarus plan to stay in the country for now, due to the presence of relatives and friends, but one in three respondents expressed a desire to return home when it is safe to do so. The majority of Ukrainian refugees in Belarus have either higher or specialized secondary education in the service sector, engineering, manufacturing, construction and education. The individuals who intend to stay in Belarus plan to continue their professions as lawyers, doctors, nurses, teachers, accountants or in the service sector as cooks, hairdressers, and security personnel. Almost every refugee and migrant interviewed by DTM received humanitarian assistance in Belarus, mostly from international organizations, including IOM, and the Belarusian Red Cross. All of them still require more support, including financial assistance, food and hygiene items, clothes, and access to healthcare services.

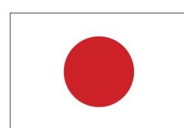
In mid-September, the second round of the needs and intentions survey was launched in cooperation with the Belarusian Red Cross and the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The second round covers not only the profiles, intentions and urgent needs of migrants and refugees, but also looks into winterization and schooling needs, intentions to return to Ukraine and integration prospects for migrants and refugees intending to remain in Belarus for a longer period.

To ensure that information about IOM's assistance reaches potential beneficiaries, IOM supports the hotline on safe migration and combatting human trafficking, which is maintained by its partner NGO, the Business Women Club. The toll-free hotline provides consultations on various issues related to travel and stay abroad, such as employment, movement restrictions related to COVID-19, education abroad, visa issues, and useful contact information, among other areas. Since the start of the war in Ukraine, the hotline has played a crucial role in referring refugees and migrants to available in-country services, particularly those provided by IOM. In September, the hotline provided 179 consultations to refugees and TCNs fleeing Ukraine on migration issues and available assistance in Belarus, amounting to 37.5 per cent of all the consultations provided. **Overall, since 24 February, the hotline has provided 1,039 consultations to people fleeing Ukraine.**

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