

HIGHLIGHTS

Since the start of the war, IOM has provided humanitarian assistance to **1,405 persons** fleeing Ukraine and protection assistance to **143 Ukraine nationals and third country nationals (TCNs)**.

Since 24 February, the IOM-supported hotline on safe migration and combatting human trafficking received over **1,198 requests** (28.9% 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 **623 migrants**.



IOM Belarus staff hands over a box with household items for Tatsiana, refugee from Mariupol © IOM 2022

SITUATION OVERVIEW

Since 24 February, 61,659 Ukrainian nationals have entered Belarus, as reported by the [State Border Committee of Belarus](#).

In Belarus, Ukrainian nationals are exempt 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 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. Ukrainian citizens have equal rights as Belarusian citizens to preschool, general and vocational education; affordable medical care; allowances for children; and pensions.

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.

CURRENT RESPONSE ACTIVITIES

IOM is present in five out of six regions of the country – Minsk, Gomel, Mogilev, Vitebsk and Brest – and provides support to migrants and refugees, including through vulnerability screenings, referrals and delivering assistance.

In the reporting period, 197 people approached IOM for assistance. This brings the total number of people who approached IOM for support since the start of the war to 1,418 individuals. IOM screened these individuals for potential vulnerabilities, conducted needs assessments, and provided or planned for necessary assistance.

CONTACTS

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

During the reporting period, 228 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 1,405 people through several forms of humanitarian aid.

Type of assistance	Number of beneficiaries reached in October	Total number of beneficiaries since the start of the war
Food items	151	999
Hygiene items	151	999
Non-food items (clothes, footwear, school kits, household items)	71	333
Accommodation support	12	31
Transportation support	22	52
Vouchers for medicine	77	317
Medication	5	40
Referral to medical institutions	2	23
Psychosocial support	19	96
Psychological consultations	8	45
Counselling support, referral to other institutions for case management	33	168

When necessary, IOM provides accommodation support to vulnerable migrants. In October, an average of 50 migrants were accommodated in hostels on a daily basis. All individuals supported by IOM are hosted in local hostels and are provided with food, hygiene items and necessary clothing.



Household items are prepared to be delivered to beneficiaries © IOM 2022

PROTECTION

In addition to humanitarian assistance, IOM also supports refugees and migrants fleeing Ukraine with protection assistance, meaning securing employment in Belarus through the payment of legal aid, employment permits, and assisting with the voluntary return of TCNs to their countries of origin.

In the reporting period, 30 individuals received protection assistance from IOM: 1 person was assisted with the payment of their employment permit; 16 persons benefitted from payments for employment-related legal aid, including translations certified by a notary; 2 beneficiaries started vocational training in floristics and physiotherapy; 1 TCN voluntarily returned home.

In total, since mid-May, 143 people have benefitted from IOM's protection assistance:

- IOM paid the state fees for 27 employment permits;
- 81 people received employment-related assistance and legal aid (payment for services);
- 3 persons were assisted with medical check-ups for employment;
- 21 individuals were assisted through IOM sponsorship for vocational training.
- 9 TCNs who fled the war in Ukraine were assisted with voluntary return to their countries of origin.

In addition to the return support provided to TCNs fleeing Ukraine, IOM also helps vulnerable migrants from other countries with return assistance. In October, IOM Belarus provided voluntary return assistance to 30 migrants.

Overall, in 2022, IOM Belarus provided assistance with voluntary return to 623 persons. The beneficiaries have returned to 34 countries of origin, including Iraq, Cuba, Sri Lanka, Türkiye, Nigeria and others.

COOPERATION WITH PARTNERS

To implement its response activities and provide assistance to refugees and migrants, IOM works closely with numerous partners – governmental entities, mainly the Ministry of Interior mandated with migration issues in the country, UN agencies and civil society organizations, including the Belarusian Red Cross (BRC), Belarusian Movement of Medical Workers (BMMW) and Business Women Club.

IOM's NGO partner, the Belarusian Movement of Medical Workers, has referred 71 people to IOM for further humanitarian and protection assistance.

In October, IOM attended the monthly meeting of the Refugee Coordination Forum led by UNHCR and created to exchange information and coordinate assistance to refugees from Ukraine in Belarus. Participants of the Forum include UN agencies, International Federation of Red Cross, Belarusian Red Cross and Ministry of Internal Affairs of Belarus. In view of the approaching winter, the focus of the discussion was winterization needs.

IOM Belarus is part to the development process of the 2023 UNHCR Refugee Response Plan (RRP), having provided programme and budget inputs. On 14 October, IOM Belarus took part in the United Nations Resident Coordinator-led technical briefing session on the Regional Refugee Response Plan for the donor community.

The IOM Belarus Chief of Mission undertook a work visit to Vitebsk to meet with key partners including local authorities and NGOs, raise awareness about IOM's project site in Vitebsk and enhance the coordination of assistance to refugees and migrants.

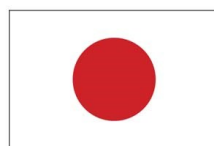
Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) activities continued with support in the field from the Belarusian Red Cross. The second round of DTM will cover not only the profiles, intentions and urgent needs of migrants and refugees, but also looks into winterization and schooling needs, intentions to return 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 October, the hotline provided 159 consultations to refugees and TCNs fleeing Ukraine on migration issues and available assistance in Belarus, amounting to 28 per cent of all the consultations provided. Overall, since 24 February, the hotline has provided 1,198 consultations to people fleeing Ukraine.

IOM ACTIVITIES ARE SUPPORTED BY:



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