

Latvia

February 2023

Refugee Protection: Latvia has continued receiving large numbers of refugees from Ukraine in 2022, corresponding to 2% of the country's population.

Emergency Situation: Due to the continued irregular arrival of asylum-seekers and migrants via Belarus the state of emergency was extended until May 2023, limiting access to asylum.

Government Action Plan for refugees from Ukraine has been adopted in Latvia extending the same level of protection and assistance for refugees from Ukraine in 2023.

UNHCR POPULATION STATISTICS AS OF MID-2022*

Refugees	35,081
Asylum-seekers	170
Stateless persons	195,354*

Top three countries of origin*

Refugees		Asylum-seekers	
Ukraine	34,256	Afghanistan	46
Syrian Arab. Rep.	317	Russian Fed	38
Afghanistan	147	Belarus	23

*UNHCR 2022 Mid-Year Trends and UNHCR [data finder](#)

UKRAINE REFUGEE SITUATION RESPONSE

As of mid-February 2023, **45,687 refugees from Ukraine** were registered for temporary protection in Latvia.

Assistance at the border: UNHCR with NGO partner "I Want to Help Refugees" provided basic needs assistance and information to more than 14,325 refugees from Ukraine in the border areas between September and December 2022.

Reception: UNHCR and partners support the reception of and assistance to refugees from Ukraine in close coordination with the Government.

Support to the most vulnerable: UNHCR scaled up its support for the protection of children, for the prevention of gender-based violence and communicating with refugee communities.

Inclusion: UNHCR launched a toolkit "Effective Inclusion of Refugees: participatory approaches for practitioners at the local level."

HIGHLIGHTS

2023 RRP for the Ukraine situation

Latvia is included in the Regional Refugee Response Plan for the Ukraine situation (RRP). The RRP aims to strengthen cooperation among civil society organizations and UN agencies to ensure effective assistance to refugees from Ukraine, in complementarity to the government's efforts. The RRP is also a fundraising tool for partners involved in the response.

Law on Assistance to Ukrainian Civilians

The Government of Latvia extended the Law on Assistance to Ukrainian Civilians thus continuing effective protection and facilitating access of refugees from Ukraine to rights and services on an equal footing with Latvian citizens in 2023.

230,000 persons from Ukraine

transited through Latvia to other EU Member States or returned to the government-controlled territories of Ukraine in 2022.



UNHCR SUPPORTED LATVIA WITH RELIEF ITEMS FOR REFUGEES FROM UKRAINE

In October 2022, UNHCR delivered relief items for the temporary accommodation of refugees from Ukraine. The items included field cots, mattresses, duvets, and pillows to strengthen emergency preparedness for new arrivals of refugees in different municipalities.

Read more about this project [here](#):

Key Priorities

- **Law and policy:** UNHCR and partners advocate for support for EU legal and policy developments, and implementation of EU standards in accordance with international obligations, including in times of emergency.
- **Protection-Sensitive Entry System:** UNHCR conducts border monitoring activities to ensure that asylum-seekers have access to territory and asylum, and assists with capacitation of border guards with the objective of pro-active identification of asylum requests and their efficient referral to the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs.
- **Asylum procedures:** UNHCR works with counterparts to ensure the quality and efficiency of asylum procedures, contingency preparedness and dignified reception arrangements with due regard to living standards and special needs.
- **Integration:** UNHCR supports local stakeholders including municipalities and NGOs in Latvia in promoting local integration of refugees and their participation in society.
- **Detention:** UNHCR advocates for the use of detention as a measure of last resort, promotes alternatives to detention, and encourages the authorities to refrain from detention of children.
- **Integration:** UNHCR encourages the development of a holistic integration strategy focusing on all beneficiaries of international protection to ensure mainstreaming of services into social assistance programmes and provision of targeted support (language, housing and employment). UNHCR also supports regular public campaigns and awareness raising activities to promote the diversity and prevent intolerance and xenophobia against refugees and immigrants.

Working with Partners

- UNHCR works with the MFA, the MOI, the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs, and the State Border Guard as the main governmental bodies responsible for policy/planning on asylum issues, “non-citizens” and stateless persons. To support refugee integration, UNHCR cooperates with the Min. of Welfare, the Min. of Culture, the Society Integration Foundation, the Ombudsman’s Office, municipalities, civil society and NGOs. In addition UNHCR works with the Nordic Council of Ministers Office in Latvia to foster Nordic-Baltic cooperation of integration actors.
- **External engagement:** UNHCR works with partners to raise awareness and to promote inclusion of refugee voices in national public debates.

Statelessness

- Latvia is a state party to both the 1954 and 1961 Conventions and is a strong supporter of the UNHCR’s #Ibelong campaign to End Statelessness.
- There are two groups of concern to UNHCR: the “non-citizens”, and stateless persons determined in the Statelessness Determination Procedure. While the “non-citizens” in Latvia are entitled to rights generally beyond the minimum rights prescribed by the 1954 Convention, in comparison with the situation of citizens of Latvia, differences exist in access to employment, purchasing property, political rights and retirement grants.

UNHCR Nordic and Baltic Countries

Staff:

19 National Staff
 15 International Staff
 2 Affiliate Work Force

Offices:

1 Regional Office in Stockholm
 1 Liaison Office in Vilnius
 1 Liaison Office in Tallinn
 1 Liaison Office in Riga

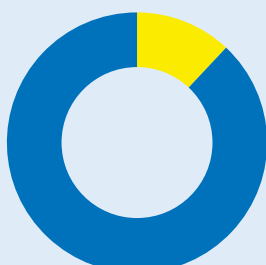
Financial information* (February 2023)

*Information relates to the Representation for the Nordic and Baltic countries, which includes Representation for Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway and Sweden

Financial requirements

USD 14 M

Funding gap
 88%
 12.4 M



Funded
 12%
 1.6 M

UNHCR is grateful for the support from our top government donors of unearmarked, softly earmarked and earmarked funding:

Australia | Austria | Belgium | Canada | Denmark | France | Germany | Ireland | Italy | Japan | Netherlands | Norway | Spain | Sweden | Switzerland | United Kingdom | United States of America

As well as for the generous contributions from private individuals and the private sector.