

Russian Federation

December 2023

Presence: The UN Refugee Agency has been working in the Russian Federation since 1992. It currently operates through a Country Office located in Moscow.

Legal Framework: The Russian Federation is party to the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol. The national refugee law was adopted in 1993.

As of 31 December 2023, **244 refugees**, **17,308 temporary asylum status holders** and **8,548 asylum-seekers** were registered by the Ministry of the Interior (MoI) of the Russian Federation.

KEY FIGURES

1,212,585*

refugees and displaced persons from Donetsk, Luhansk and other regions of Ukraine recorded in Russia as of 30 June 2023

2,852,395*

border crossings from Ukraine to Russia through Russia–Ukraine border from 24 February to 4 October 2022

89,477

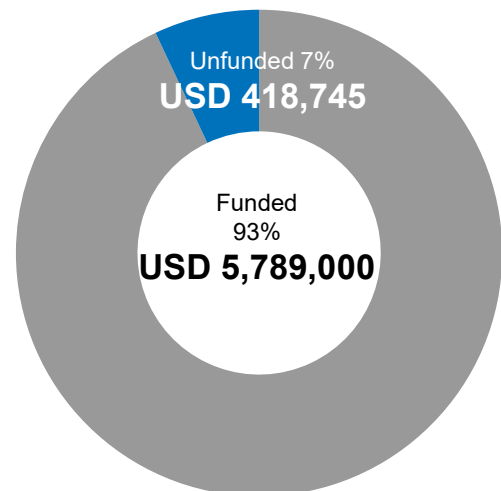
refugees and displaced persons from Donetsk, Luhansk and other regions of Ukraine were provided with counselling by UNHCR and its partners, either in person or over the phone since January 2023

**Data sources: UNHCR collation of statistics made available by the authorities*

FUNDING (AS OF 15 DECEMBER 2023)

USD 6.2 million

requested for the operation in Russia in 2023



Participants of UNHCR's seminar for Russian Red Cross © UNHCR/Ruslan Altimirov



Ceremony of awarding diplomas to student participants of a human rights contest © Press Office of Human Rights Commissioner in Saint Petersburg

- **Participation in the Ministry of Interior Conference.** On 07 December, UNHCR Representative was among the guest speakers at the Scientific and Practical Conference on Cooperation between CIS Law Enforcement Agencies in Combating Illegal Migration, organized by the Russian Ministry of the Interior (Mol). UNHCR focused on the distinction between migrants and refugees, related safeguards, and specific rights of each category. UNHCR emphasized the need to ensure that asylum-seekers have access to asylum procedures, highlighted the importance of cooperation at national and regional levels and mentioned a concept UNHCR has been working on to address mixed movements, the Route-Based Approach.
- **UNHCR's seminars for NGO partners:** In December, UNHCR organized two seminars for partner NGOs:
 - On 15 December, UNHCR held a seminar for the Russian Red Cross (RRC) including central, regional, and other branches. RRC staff from 21 regions of Russia participated in the seminar, the majority of whom joined UNHCR during missions to Temporary Accommodation Points (TAPs). The seminar provided an opportunity to review the needs identified during the participatory assessment sessions with refugees and to discuss solutions and regional practices. Specific sessions were devoted to issues concerning persons with specific needs, Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) and data protection.
 - On 26 December, UNHCR held refresher sessions on principles applicable to integration, participatory assessment, as well as the UNHCR Code of Conduct, including PSEA, data protection and fraud prevention, for 34 staff members of partner NGOs – Civic Assistance, Peace and Progress, Faith, Hope and Love, the Institute of Human Rights and Home is Near. Participants engaged in active group discussions to review their achievements and obstacles in 2023 and define key priorities for 2024. A psychologist from one of the partner organizations made a presentation on resilience and mechanisms of coping with stress and professional burnout.
- **Mission to Kirov.** From 04-06 December, UNHCR and the Office for the Commissioner for Human Rights in the Russian Federation visited two TAPs in the Kirov Region, hosting 140 refugees from Ukraine, as well as urban refugees. UNHCR also visited 2 TAP-apartments out of the 12 located in the region. The TAP-apartments host families, which should include an employed member. This accommodation is provided through regional governments, which conclude agreements with landlords for three months and cover rent and utilities. The two families UNHCR met were satisfied with the accommodation conditions, as well as the continued support.
- **Mission to Pskov.** On 11-14 December, UNHCR and the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights met refugees from Ukraine residing in and outside TAPs in the Pskov Region. UNHCR visited 2 TAPs out of the 4 located in the region. One of the visited TAPs is in the city of Pskov, while the other is 250 km south of Pskov. Residents of the city-based TAP are employed and are also supported by the authorities, which organize transport to potential workplaces, allowing refugees to gain first-hand experience in different work environments. The authorities established a list of employers offering housing, while retirees are provided with living spaces from a designated pool of apartments dedicated to those facing emergency situations or serious needs. All refugees were satisfied but still raised concerns about housing and with regard to compensation for lost property in their home regions.
- **Winter support for vulnerable categories of asylum-seekers and refugees.** UNHCR contributed to the needs of the most vulnerable asylum-seekers and refugees through two of its partners, namely Civic Assistance and the RRC branch in Saint Petersburg. The “winter allowance” was provided to refugees from Ukraine and from other countries. The allowance targeted children up to 17 years, unaccompanied minors, refugees over 60, single parents with children, victims of sexual/gender-based violence and persons with serious health issues. As of end of December, 200 refugees from Ukraine and 163 from other countries received the allowance.
- **Litigation activities.** Several Afghan asylum-seekers were represented by UNHCR partner lawyers in different regions who were able to overturn negative asylum decisions. In other regions, expulsion decisions against Afghan families were also overturned by the courts, which were provided with UNHCR's legal letters on non-refoulement and country of origin information on Afghanistan. In Saint Petersburg, a Palestinian asylum-seeker was also supported with a UNHCR communication and was ultimately admitted into the asylum procedure. As a result of UNHCR partner's intervention, the UN Human Rights Committee granted interim measures in the case of a national of Syria, who was then able to re-submit an application for asylum.
- **Local Integration.** Through the intervention of UNHCR legal partners, 4 Afghan nationals were granted Russian citizenship; another 6 Afghans received residence permits, while 9 more Afghan nationals have been granted temporary asylum.
- **MUN Refugee Challenge in Vladivostok.** From 1 to 5 December, Vladivostok hosted the 22nd Annual Model UN in the Far East 2023 Conference, as part of the MUN Refugee Challenge, a competition that aims at finding solutions to refugee problems. The event, organized by the Model UN in the Far East Youth Public Association together with the Far Eastern Federal University, also discussed forced displacement due to climate change.
- **Student human right contests in Saint Petersburg and Tambov/UNHCR's nominations.** On 8 December, the winners of the XI Student Competition on human rights were honoured in Saint Petersburg. In 2023, the contest covered the legal situation of stateless persons and measures to prevent, reduce and eliminate statelessness,

coinciding with the ninth anniversary of the global #IBelong campaign. UNHCR Russia awarded the winners and runners-up in this category. On 28 December, two students from the Tambov region were awarded diplomas for their essays on refugee-related topics. The winner in UNHCR's category elaborated on the regional dimension of receiving refugees and made a comprehensive analysis of the protection system in place.

- **Video on “16 days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence” campaign.** UNHCR prepared a [video](#) summing up the activities arranged by UNHCR and its partners to mark the global “16 days of Activism against GBV” campaign. The video features a presentation on domestic violence and gaslighting, a lecture on women’s reproductive health and a workshop on the creation of jewellery out of recycled materials. The video also includes interviews with key personalities, explaining the history of this date and the importance of the campaign.

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