

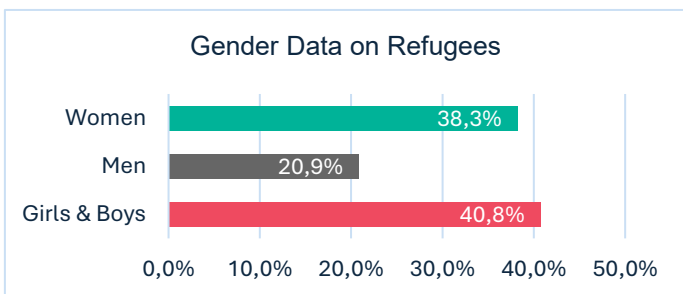
OPERATIONAL UPDATE MARCH 2026



Children playing in the newly renovated crèche group in Cahul highlight efforts to expand safe, inclusive early childhood services for local and refugee children while enabling parents to access employment. ©UNHCR/Alberto Favero

KEY FIGURES

140,698 Ukrainian refugees reside in Moldova.



91,088 Ukrainian refugees granted Temporary Protection.

6,272 citizens of Ukraine granted residence permits, either permanent or temporary.

~ **13,000** refugees received cash assistance.

~ **3,900** refugees received legal assistance.

~ **4,400** individuals accessed information through the UNHCR-supported helpline.

~ **300** refugees supported with specialized GBV and Child Protection services.

OPERATIONAL CONTEXT

As of March 2026, the Republic of Moldova (hereinafter “Moldova”) hosts 140,698 refugees from Ukraine, many of whom require continued humanitarian assistance and access to specialized services. The security situation remains fragile amid the ongoing war in neighbouring Ukraine. Recent repeated attacks on critical infrastructure in Ukraine have directly affected Moldova, disrupting access to essential services and prompting emergency responses. In March, a strike on a hydropower facility in Ukraine caused petroleum contamination in the Nistru River – a primary source of drinking water. This triggered a 15-day environmental alert, with water supply suspended or limited across parts of northern and central Moldova.

At the same time, damage to a major high-voltage transmission line disrupted electricity import. In response, the Government declared a 60-day state of emergency in the energy sector. Although alternative supply routes from Romania and Ukraine were used, they did not fully cover demand, resulting in electricity shortages. These disruptions have limited access to electricity and safe water, heightening risks for both refugee and host communities while placing additional pressure on national systems and humanitarian response. Moreover, the energy crisis led to rising inflation, reducing purchasing power across the population and further limiting households’ ability to cope with increased energy and living costs.

HIGHLIGHTS

Update on RAC Consolidation Process

In March 2026, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (MLSP), with UNHCR support, resumed the consolidation of Refugee Accommodation Centres (RACs). Currently, about 911 refugees from Ukraine remain in 18 RACs, of whom around 68% are highly vulnerable, including older people, people with disabilities, children, and pregnant women, often with complex needs and limited capacity for self-reliance.

This phase builds on a broader consolidation process initiated in July 2023, which has reduced the RAC network from 52 centres to 18 operational facilities. The ongoing consolidation has been systematic, protection-sensitive, and necessary, reflecting a sound adjustment of capacity to evolving needs as many centres were no longer required. To date, 534 households (1,322 individuals) have been supported with relocation: the majority (68%) transitioned to accommodation outside RACs, while 178 households with higher vulnerabilities were relocated within the remaining centres. This has resulted in a higher concentration of individuals with complex vulnerabilities in the remaining RACs, which now increasingly function as a last-resort safety net.

To support the process in 2026, joint multi-functional team missions, conducted with partners including UNHCR, Catholic Relief Services, Law Centre for Advocates, and International Organization of Migration, were deployed to three RACs selected for closure in the coming months. These visits focused on informing residents, assessing individual needs, and facilitating referrals, ensuring coordinated and protection-sensitive relocation.

Following the withdrawal of food assistance at the beginning of 2026, UNHCR, in partnership with HelpAge Moldova, will support the daily food provision in RACs from mid-April. This support will ensure continued access to safe, adequate, and nutritious meals in line with national standards, and safeguarding the dignity and well-being of highly dependent residents.

Protection

- Continuity of legal protection and reduced risk of exclusion for vulnerable refugees were ensured through targeted outreach supporting the renewal of Temporary Protection (TP) status. As of end-March, 41,635 refugees had applied for the renewal of TP. Efforts included legal counselling and administrative assistance for 65 refugees in Rîbnița and Tiraspol on 4-5 March, enabling them to retain legal status. On 10 March, UNHCR partner Keystone Moldova reached 170 refugees with disabilities through targeted telephone outreach, providing critical information on TP renewal procedures and entitlements. In parallel, home-based registration services were delivered to bedridden individuals by mobile teams from the General Inspectorate for Migration and the Law Centre for Advocates (CDA), removing physical barriers to status renewal and access to essential services. In addition, UNHCR partner AVE Copiii offered technical guidance to child protection actors on TP procedures, strengthening support for refugee children, particularly unaccompanied and separated minors. These coordinated interventions improved access to TP procedures and maintained continuity of protection for those most at risk.
- UNHCR continued to strengthen asylum procedures and protection outcomes by investing in the capacity of national actors. On 19 March, UNHCR, in partnership with CDA, trained 14 attorneys from the National Legal Aid Council to enhance their ability to handle asylum appeals in line with national and international standards. This supports more consistent, rights-based legal representation and helps ensure that asylum seekers, including refugees from Ukraine, have effective access to remedies and fairer procedures.
- UNHCR reinforced safeguards against sexual exploitation and abuse via an online training for 32 frontline staff (24 women and 8 men) from partner organizations. By strengthening their ability

to safely identify, refer, and respond to cases in a confidential and survivor-centred manner, the initiative improves access to protection services and fosters a safer environment for refugees.

- To strengthen access to education for refugee children, UNHCR equipped families with the information needed to navigate the national education system. Partner Female Support Force engaged 27 refugees in Chişinău and 25 refugee parents in Bălţi on school enrolment procedures and recognition of Ukrainian diplomas, encouraging enrolment in local schools. As of January 2026, over 3,600 of Ukrainian children are enrolled in Moldovan education system. By addressing information gaps and supporting informed decision-making, these activities reduce barriers to entry and promote the inclusion of refugee children in formal education.

Community empowerment

- UNHCR established a Refugee Council in Bălţi – the 5th such representative body in Moldova – providing refugees from Ukraine with a formal platform to engage with local authorities. This mechanism enables direct communication and participation in local decision-making, strengthens accountability, and ensures that services are more responsive to refugees’ needs while amplifying their voices in community governance

UNHCR implemented several activities promoting inclusion of refugee children. These included reading sessions in Bender and Tiraspol reaching 20 refugee children and featuring Ukrainian author Yulia Ivashutkina, and a school-based cultural exchange event in one of schools from Chişinău, involving over 50 refugee students enrolled at the school. These initiatives created spaces for interaction, strengthened psychosocial well-being, and fostered a sense of belonging among refugee children, supporting their active participation in community life.

“We are like a seed. Our lives are constantly being replanted from one soil to another” says Elena, a Ukrainian refugee.

Elena, Iaroslav, and their daughter Eva are rebuilding their lives in Ungheni, navigating work, childcare, and the search for a home while coping with the lasting impact of displacement. Full story: [\[link\]](#)

DONORS & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS



UNHCR Moldova is also thankful for the cooperation of Moldovan authorities at all levels, other UN agencies, the private sector, individuals and civil society organizations.

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