

Belarus

September 2022

UNHCR mandate: UNHCR is assisting refugees and stateless people in Belarus since **1995**. Belarus is party to the **1951 Refugee Convention** and its **1967 Protocol** since **2001**.

Access to asylum: UNHCR continuously advocates for equal access to asylum and supports the government in strengthening its asylum system, policies, and procedures.

Emergency response: UNHCR and partners support government-led efforts to strengthen the response to the Ukraine situation, by fostering collaboration, solidarity, and inclusion.

POPULATION OF CONCERN as of 30 June 2022*

Refugees**	12,231
Asylum-seekers***	780
Stateless persons	5,626

**Includes persons with refugee status and Complementary Protection

***Persons who have applied for asylum and are awaiting a decision

TOP THREE COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN*

Refugees		Asylum-seekers	
Ukraine	12,231	Ukraine	743
Afghanistan	96	Syrian Arab Rep.	12
Syrian Arab Rep.	59	Cuba	5

*Source: UNHCR provisional mid-year 2022 data

UKRAINE REFUGEE SITUATION RESPONSE

As of 30 September, **14,219** refugees from Ukraine are currently present in Belarus. They have registered for 90 days temporary stay or applied for protection or an alternative legal status.

UNHCR regularly **monitors access to territory, temporary stay, and asylum procedures** of refugees from Ukraine. **1,618** refugees from Ukraine were counselled by UNHCR and the Refugee Counselling Service on access to asylum and other options for regularization, as well as access to health services, employment, and education.

UNHCR has supported **628 most vulnerable refugees** from Ukraine, such as older people, persons with serious medical conditions, women at risk, single parents, and persons with disabilities with **one-time emergency cash assistance**.

UNHCR has provided **458** refugees from Ukraine with **essential items**, such as blankets, pillows, and bed linen.

UNHCR with support of other UN Agencies in Belarus leads and coordinates implementation of the refugee response in close collaboration and consultation with relevant Government counterparts.

HIGHLIGHTS

Protection Profiling

To strengthen and promote an evidence-based protection response to the Ukraine situation, UNHCR and its partners are implementing a **Protection Profiling exercise** to regularly collect and analyze data about the profiles, needs and intentions of refugees from Ukraine and monitor developments over time.

Counselling on asylum-procedures

UNHCR provides asylum-related counselling over the phone and in person at the UNHCR Office in Minsk and through the Refugee Counselling Service in every region of the country. Those who wish to seek asylum are referred to the state authorities for Refugee Status Determination. From March to August 2022, at least 1,733 persons benefitted from individual legal and social counselling. Out of those, 997 persons were assisted with their asylum applications. In addition, about 120 refugees from Ukraine at Temporary Accommodation Facilities in Gomel region were reached with individual and group sessions on seeking asylum.

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE



UNHCR is distributing essential items, such as blankets, pillows and bed linen, as well as **one-time emergency cash assistance**, to support the most vulnerable refugees from Ukraine in order to settle in private accommodations within the host communities. More information in the [protection profiling and monitoring factsheet](#).

Key Priorities

- **Access to territory and asylum:** UNHCR regularly monitors the situation of refugees from Ukraine crossing the border to Belarus and transiting through third countries, as well as of other persons of concern in urban areas. UNHCR provides remote and in-person asylum-related counselling, helping asylum seekers by making appointments with asylum authorities, liaising with the Government counterpart, and assisting with interpretation.
- **Asylum procedures:** UNHCR enhances the Belarusian asylum system and the quality of state Refugee Status Determination procedures through capacity building and liaison with the asylum authorities at national and regional levels. UNHCR monitors interview and decision-making quality.
- **Protection profiling:** UNHCR implements a protection profiling exercise and strengthens data collection activities through providing capacity building, telecommunication equipment, and transportation to the Belarusian Red Cross Society.
- **Community empowerment and self-reliance:** UNHCR supported 196 asylum-seekers and refugees with multi-purpose cash-assistance to enhance refugee self-reliance in line with the objectives of the [Global Compact on Refugees](#) (GCR). This serves as a transitional safety net pending the individual's ability to find a job or be included in national social protection schemes.
- **Detention monitoring:** UNHCR and its legal partner visit detention facilities to counsel apprehended foreigners who may need international protection.

Working with Partners

- **Local partnerships:** UNHCR works in partnership with the Ministries of Internal and Foreign Affairs,

Health, Education, Labour, and Social Protection, as well as the State Border Committee to preserve the protection space in Belarus and to foster socio-economic inclusion. In 2022, UNHCR works with two implementing partners – the Belarusian Red Cross Society responsible for NFIs, cash, accommodation, food, etc.; and the Belarusian Movement of Medical Workers providing the Refugee Counselling Service.

- **Inter-Agency Coordination:** UNHCR is leading the inter-agency Refugee Coordination Forum (RCF) at country level to complement the efforts of the Government. The RCF is supported by an Operational Working Group and a Working Group on Data Collection.

Statelessness

- **International Legal Framework:** Belarus is not party to the 1954 and 1961 Statelessness Conventions. Despite the Government's pledge in October 2019 to accede to both Conventions, Belarus has not yet become party to either of these two instruments.
- **Assistance to stateless people:** UNHCR and its partner provide free legal counselling to stateless persons, primarily to facilitate their applications for citizenship or to process permanent residence permits leading to naturalization. In some instances, UNHCR provides ad hoc financial aid to vulnerable stateless people to cover mandatory payments.

UNHCR Presence in Belarus

Staff:

7 National Staff
2 International Staff

Offices:

1 Representation Office in Minsk

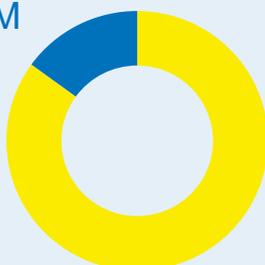
Financial information* (September 2022)

*Information relates to the Representation for Central Europe, which covers Belarus, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia, Slovenia

Financial requirements

USD 67.8 M

Funding gap
15%
10.1 M



Funded
85%
57.7M

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