

The Republic of Moldova is a rather small landlocked country stranded between Ukraine and the European Union. Shortly after the start of the war in Ukraine, we have received a massive inflow of refugees. People fleeing from the war accounted for more than 4% of the population of Moldova in spring. To put things in perspective, this is equivalent to the Netherlands compared to the EU.

Our country was not prepared to face such a challenge alone. Luckily, we were not alone. UNHCR has played a pivotal role in supporting and complementing our efforts to provide refugees shelters and basic needs. Moldova granted people fleeing the war in Ukraine the right to legal stay, housing, social welfare assistance, access to healthcare, education and employment.

UNHCR has been a valuable partner, investing resources into the creation of refugee accommodation centers, modernization of facilities, support to management, protection, legal services, logistics, warehousing, equipment. UNHCR has also provided significant support to the host community, providing additional resources to the national Population Support Fund, helping national authorities to distribute wood for heating to the most vulnerable. It has directly helped our Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, providing equipment and infrastructure improvements, boosting human resource capacity of the national social assistance network to ensure that external assistance reaches the most vulnerable.

My country is in an emergency situation for more than one year already. It started with COVID-19, then we faced a significant energy crisis with prices going through the roof, and since February we are neighboring a terrible and unjust war. Most of the legal framework that allows us to host and support refugees is based on the decisions of the emergency committee, and the emergency situation has been just prolonged for another two months.

In the meanwhile, we are finalizing a Government Decree that will allow Moldova to have a special regime for refugees – the temporary protection. The granting of temporary protection would allow for the legalization of the refugees' stay in the country for a period of at least one year, granting them a series of rights: access to employment and education, appropriate accommodation, primary and emergency medical assistance, as well as targeted social assistance, especially for families with children.

These topics have been discussed at the Moldova roundtable with development actors, donors, UN agencies, NGOs, refugees, national and local authorities, who all committed to support us in strengthening national systems and services to facilitate refugee inclusion and tackle the needs of vulnerable Moldovans, ensuring solidarity, fairness and social cohesion.

We have the best intentions, but we will not succeed alone. We count on UNHCR and our international partners.