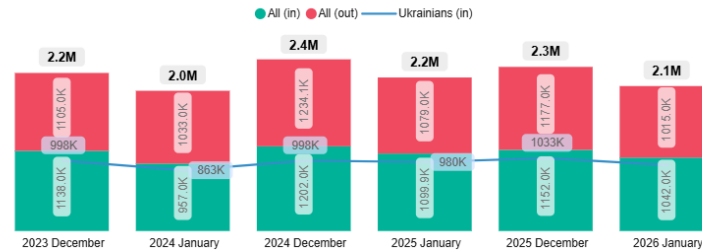


Since mid-March 2022, UNHCR and its local NGO partners Right to Protection (R2P), NEEKA, and The Tenth of April (TTA), have conducted [border monitoring at 30 crossing points](#) between Ukraine and Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Moldova.

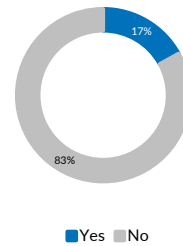
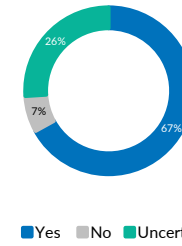
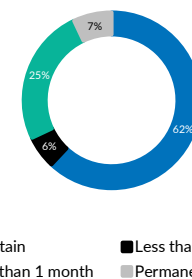
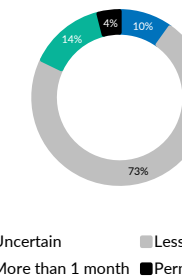
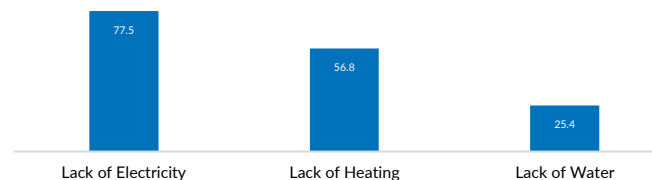
The monitoring findings are based on individual interviews conducted with people crossing the border, both those entering and exiting Ukraine and other observations made by the border monitors. As of 2025, a revised monitoring tool was deployed.

Ukraine western border movement (in and out)

Key cross-border mobility trends

- In January 2026, the SBGS recorded nearly 2.1 million border crossings - a decrease of over 200K from December 2025 and around 100K fewer crossings than in January 2025. The seasonal decline in cross-border mobility in January is consistent with patterns observed in both 2024 and 2025.
- Despite ongoing security challenges in January 2026, including numerous attacks, widespread electricity outages, and limited access to heating and water, a net inflow was recorded with 27K more people entering the country than exiting it.

Border monitoring trends for January 2026: Departures from Ukraine

- 17% of respondents said they were [departing Ukraine for the first time](#) since 24 February 2022, representing a decrease of 5% from December and 11% from November 2025. 16% reported departing to seek safety abroad and 14% were returning to their TP countries, decreasing by 5% and 2%, respectively, compared to December.
- 7% of respondents were [internally displaced prior to departing Ukraine](#). Of those, almost 17% said that this influenced their decision to leave.
- 94% of those interviewed noted security concerns as a main reason for their departure. [Energy-related reasons remained the second most frequently reported drivers for departure in January 2026](#): Almost 78% reported electricity issues, nearly 57% heating problems, and 25% water shortages. Lack of access to water as a reason for departure increased by 9% from December. Fear of conscription was mentioned by almost 6%, which is almost twice as high as in December 2025. Occupation of areas of residence was mentioned by 4% among the reasons for departure.
- 62% were unsure about the [duration of their stay abroad](#) (a decrease by 12% from December). 25% planned to stay 1-12 months (8% increase from December). 6% reported plans to stay less than a month (doubling comparing to December), and 7% planned to stay abroad permanently – a 2% increase from December.
- 67% of respondents indicated their [intention to return to Ukraine](#) should the situation stabilize (13% increase from December), while 26% were unsure and 7% stated that they would not return. 44% of the respondents mentioned the improvement of the security situation as the [main factor for their return](#), while 33% and 19% respectively mentioned stabilization of the access to electricity and access to livelihoods. The cut of assistance programs abroad may influence return decisions of 3% of respondents.

First-time departure since Feb 2022 January 2026

Intention to return should the situation stabilize January 2026

Intended duration of stay abroad January 2026

Intended duration of stay in Ukraine January 2026

Energy-related reasons for departing January 2026

Border monitoring trends for January 2026: Returns to Ukraine

- 73% of respondents reported planning a short-term [stay in Ukraine](#) of less than one month – a 4% decrease compared to December 2025. As in December, 10% were uncertain about their length of stay, while 14% planned to stay 1–12 months, which is 6% increase compared to December. 4% intended to return permanently (2% decrease).
- In January 2026, limited access to healthcare in the host country was the [primary reason for visiting Ukraine](#) mentioned by 32% of respondents. This was followed by family-related reasons and homesickness reported by 25% and 22% respectively. Other reported reasons included the need to check on property (13%), uncertainty regarding legal status abroad (3%) and lack of access to labor market abroad (1%).

In January 2026, monitors conducted [1,436 individual interviews](#) at the borders, where 79% of respondents were departing, and 21% entering Ukraine.

[Entering Ukraine](#): 308 interviews were conducted with people entering Ukraine in December 2025. 78% of respondents were female and 21% male. 26% of respondents were above the age of 60 years.

[Departing Ukraine](#): 1,128 interviews were conducted with people departing Ukraine. 66% of respondents were female and 33% male. 13% of respondents were above 60 years.

Reporting by the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine

- In January 2026, the SBGS published a significant number of updates on smuggling-related arrests and detentions, including the exposure of illegal border crossing schemes. Additionally, updates included reports of intercepted attempts by men of conscription age to cross the border irregularly, both individually and in groups. [Cases](#) included unsuccessful crossings through mountainous areas, with rescue teams deployed in some instances, as well as an attempt involving a fake [marriage](#) to become eligible to cross the border.
- The SBGS [reported](#) on the prevention of an attempted trafficking case. The case involved the use of a messaging application to target women in vulnerable situations.
- On 31st January, the SBGS [reported](#) delays at all Ukrainian border crossing points with Moldova due to weather conditions, power outages, and a customs database failure. Operations were later resumed the same day.

In January 2026, UNHCR partners, R2P, NEEKA and TTA, conducted 237 monitoring visits to the monitored BCPs. During these visits, [UNHCR's partners provided different forms of support to 668 individuals](#). This support included counselling of 536 people, provision of legal assistance to 125 people, while 53 persons were provided with transportation services and 32 persons received social accompaniment.