



**UNHCR UKRAINE BORDER MONITORING**  
**AT INTERNATIONAL BORDER CROSSING POINTS**  
(Borders between Ukraine, the EU and Moldova)  
**December 2024**

Waiting area for buses at Shehyni BCP, December 2024. © Right to Protection.

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 border crossing points between Ukraine and Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Moldova. The border monitoring teams provide information, legal assistance, protection counselling and social support to people leaving Ukraine to seek international protection as well as to those returning to Ukraine.

**1. Overview: Cross-Border Movements (in and out)**

The gradual decline in cross-border movement that began in September 2024 expectedly reversed in December 2024 due to the holiday season, reaching a total of 2,436,100 border crossings, an increase in over 400,000 crossings compared to November 2024. This holiday season-related uptake in border crossings mirrors the border crossing trends in 2023.

**Ukraine western border movement (in and out)**

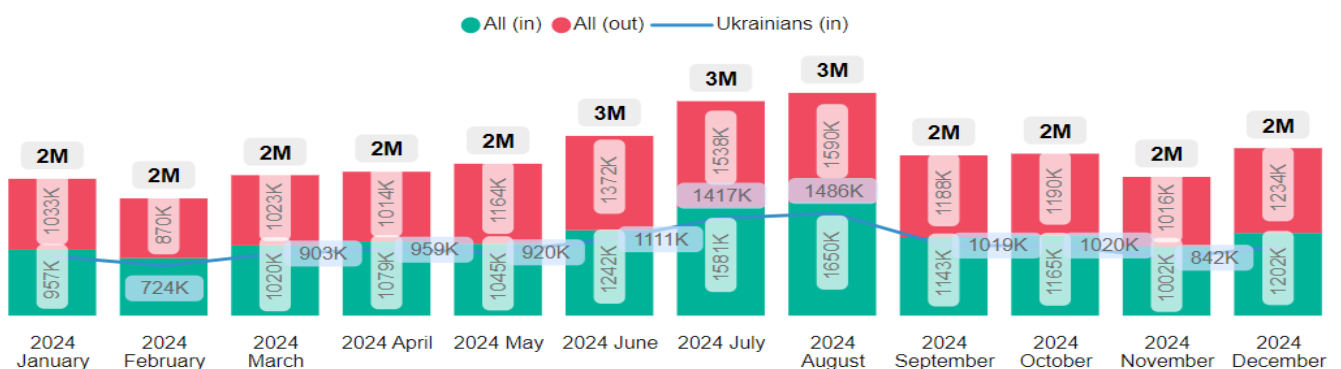


Figure 1: Number of people crossing international borders with Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and Romania. The figure does not include data on border crossings with Moldova. Source: State Border Guard Service (SBGS) of Ukraine.

Comparing cross-border movements in December 2024 with those in December 2023, while of similar scale, a slightly increased overall cross-border mobility of some 190K crossings was observed in December 2024. Both, in and outflows were elevated compared to December 2023.

While in December 2023, inbound movements prevailed, with 33,000 more people entering the country than exiting, in December 2024, a net outflow of 32,000 people was reported by the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine (SBGS).

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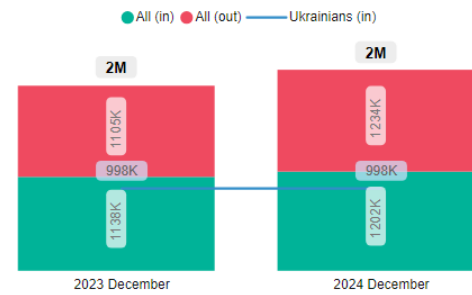


Figure 2: Number of people crossing international borders with Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and Romania for December 2023 and 2024 in comparison. The figure does not include data on border crossings with Moldova. Source: SBGS

## 2. Key monitoring findings

- The number of **people leaving the country to seek safety** abroad fell from 24% in October and 23% in November to 16% in December 2024, continuing a gradual yet consistent decline in the fourth quarter. In part, this is due to the pendular cross-border movements. At the same time the share of **first-time departures** among those surveyed increased to 24% in December from the 18% in November.
- **Reasons for departures.** Nearly 99% cited the deterioration of the security situation as the primary reason for leaving Ukraine in December, followed by lack of access to electricity, heating and water at 32% and housing-related concerns at 9%. While in December, a relative decrease in concerns over these energy-related services was observed, this is likely related to the increased departures for this reason in November and the fewer energy outages observed in December.
- **Duration to stay abroad.** Uncertainty about the duration of stay abroad and about returning to Ukraine should the security situation prevail continued in December 2024. 64% of those leaving the country that were surveyed were unsure how long they would stay abroad. Overall, in 2024, such uncertainty grew. While in the first half of the year, on average 45.5% expressed uncertainty over the duration of stay abroad, in the second half of the year, this average grew to 62.5% of those surveyed expressing such uncertainty.
- **Intentions to return.** In December 2024, intentions to return should the security situation stabilize reached an annual low among those surveyed at 49%. Generally, in the fourth quarter of 2024, those surveyed expressed a growing uncertainty about returning, with 44% doing so in December 2024.
- **Duration of stay in Ukraine.** Of those surveyed when entering Ukraine, short-term stays of less than one month remain most prevalent in December at 94% as throughout the year (annual average: 86%).

## 3. Public information by the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine on cross-border movements

- During the reporting period, compared to November 2024, the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine (SBGS) reported significantly fewer smuggling-related detentions and arrests on its website. These involved individuals organizing irregular border crossings for men of conscription age: three cases, compared to over 15 in November.
- Despite the decrease in publicly reported arrests and detentions of smugglers, the number of attempts of groups to cross the border irregularly continued. Routes vary across natural barriers such as rivers, mountains and other natural obstacles. In one reported case, the attempt even led to at least two **fatalities** in the Tysa River.
- Denials to cross the border to couples (men of conscription age traveling with women with disability) continue to be regularly reported, with over ten cases reported on the SBGS website.

## SOUNDBITES FROM THE BORDERS

- Monitors reported on the increase in cross-border movement across all border-crossing points in the second half of December, driven by both departures and arrivals related to the winter holidays.
- Monitors observed an increase in the presence of law enforcement authorities on Odeska and Zakarpatska oblasts, including territorial military commissariats, checking documents, particularly of men of conscription age.
- Monitors from Lvivska oblast informed that many denials to leave Ukraine are issued to men of conscription age, while denials for entry into Poland are due to insufficient funds, overstay in Poland, car tinting, or studded tires.
- On December 21st, the new border crossing point (BCP) at Nyzhynkivychi (border with Poland) was opened and has already become quite popular among travelers. Plans are underway to establish a pedestrian crossing in the future.

### 4. Support provided at the border crossings in December 2024

In December 2024, UNHCR partners, R2P, NEEKA and TTA, conducted **218 monitoring visits to the BCPs** with Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Moldova. During these visits, UNHCR's partners provided different forms of support to **1,399 individuals** who crossed the border. This support included a range of services, including 1,316 instances of protection counselling and 122 instances of legal assistance, while 20 persons received social accompaniment and 41 persons were provided with transportation services.

Overall, from January to December 2024, UNHCR partners supported more than **17,000 individuals** crossing the borders.

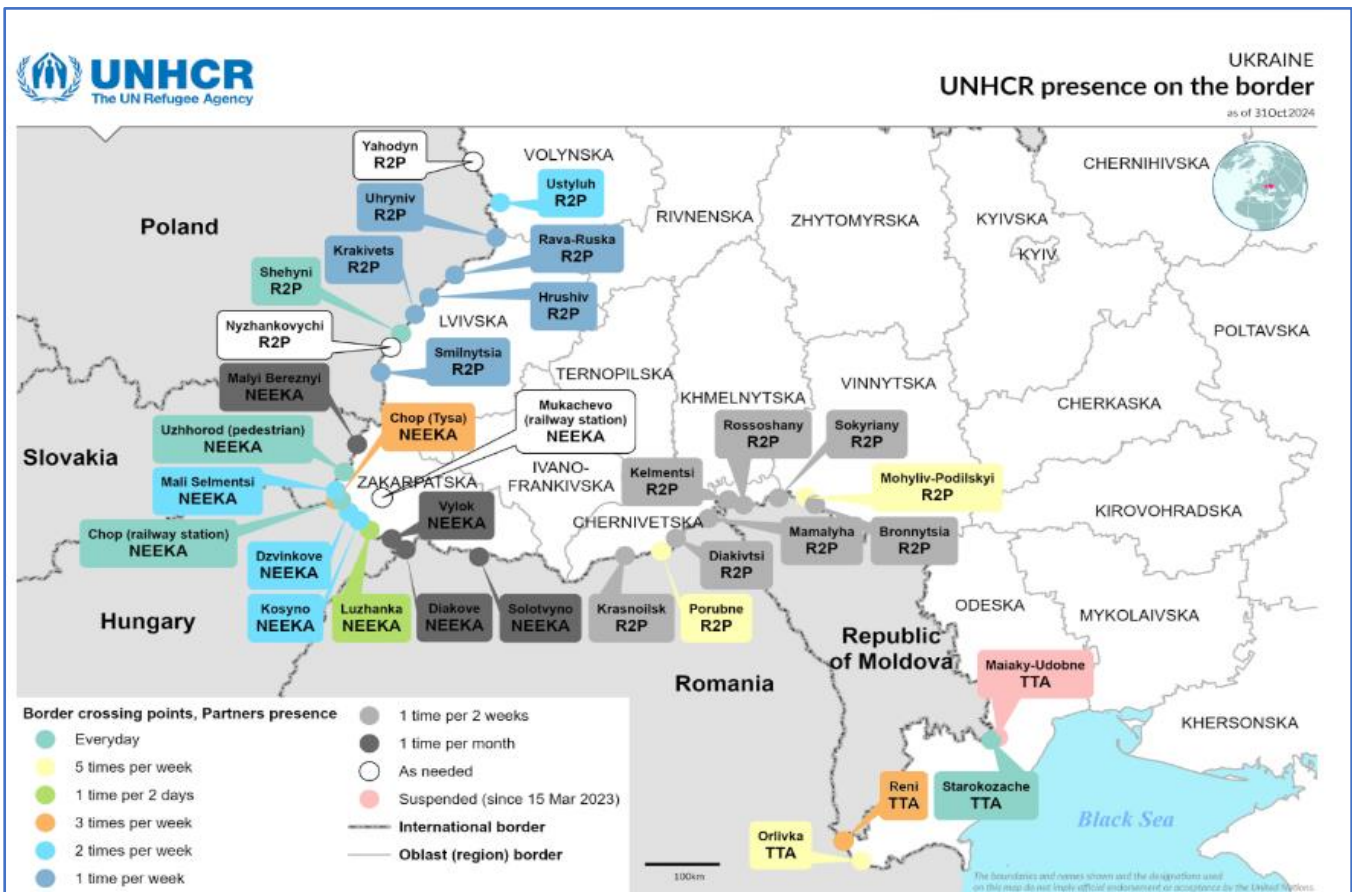
### Note on Methodology

From January to December 2024, a total of 32,103 people were surveyed by UNHCR partners at the borders. In December 2024, UNHCR partners surveyed 1,558 people (comprising 68% females 18-59 years of age, 18% males 18-59 years of age, 6% females 60+ years of age, 8% males 60+ years of age and 1,5% persons with disabilities).

Since mid-March 2022, UNHCR has deployed border monitoring teams through local NGO partners to provide information and assistance to people crossing the border with EU countries (Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania) and Moldova. These teams provide information, legal assistance, protection counselling and social support to people leaving Ukraine to seek international protection, as well as to those returning to the country.

Border monitoring teams conduct individual interviews with people who are exiting and entering Ukraine. The purpose of these interviews is to gather information about the individual circumstances, reasons for moving and their protection needs. The border monitoring methodology is focused on assessing and responding to the protection and humanitarian needs of people crossing the border between Ukraine and the EU countries and Moldova. By conducting interviews, gathering data, and providing necessary support, the goal is to enhance protection measures and ensure the well-being of those who are on the move.

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.



### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

- See Border Snapshot for September 2024 [here](#), October 2024 [here](#), November 2024 [here](#).
- Visit Ukraine's Operational Data Portal for more information products [here](#).
- Visit UNHCR Ukraine's Website [here](#).

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