

## UNHCR's Protection Response

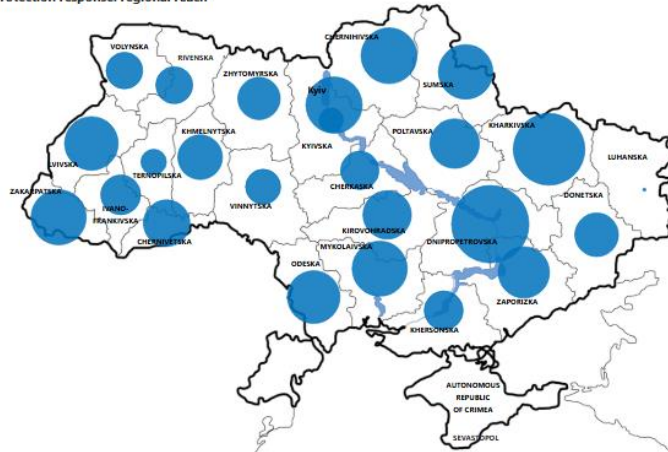
- The protection response by UNHCR and our partners provides tailored support to those most in need, aims to strengthen inclusive national systems and services, and encourages the participation of internally displaced people (IDPs) and returnees in decisions that affect them.
- Our protection response complements, reinforces and strengthens the capacity of national protection services to serve the growing population in need, in line with the Memoranda of Understanding with Ministries and Oblast authorities.
- In implementing our protection response, we work directly with communities, including our network of some 550 community-based organizations, some 100 IDP Councils and predominantly local NGO partners. In 2025, UNHCR works with 14 predominantly national partners.



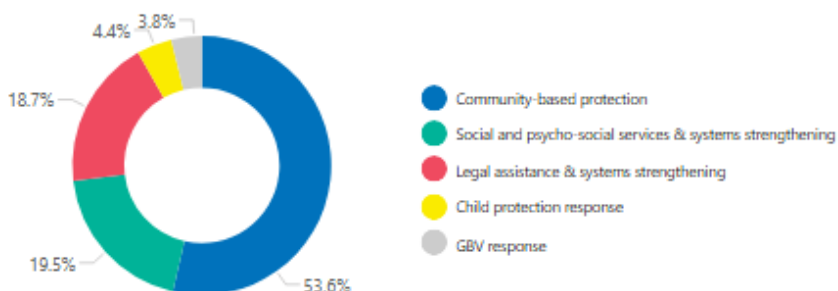
UNHCR and our partner R2P supported equipping the waiting area at the Krakivets-Korchova border crossing checkpoint. UNHCR and partners, in close cooperation with the State Border Guard Services, have been working at 30 border crossings since 2022 monitoring the situation and providing immediate assistance to people at the borders. © Lviv Custom Service, 10 March 2025.

- In the first quarter of 2025, **UNHCR's protection response has reached 132,597 people**. Of those, 71 per cent are females, 35 per cent are older people above the age of 60 years, while over 6 per cent are minors. 14,000 people supported are living with a disability.
- UNHCR and partners promoted legal and policy developments through **57 advocacy and judicial interventions** aimed at improving access to rights and services for forcibly displaced and stateless people.
- UNHCR and partners also **supported 337 civil society entities**, notably community-based organizations and IDP councils, and provided technical assistance to **13 government counterparts**.
- Access to services was improved for **20,377 people living in collective sites**. Of those, 35 per cent are older people and 2,000 are people living with a disability.

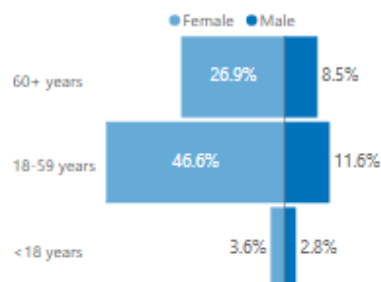
Protection response: regional reach



Protection response overview



Protection response: age and sex breakdown



## Supporting a national system that protects

\*Figures may be subject to change following validation.

UNHCR's goal is to support and strengthen the national system protecting internally displaced and other war-affected people, asylum seekers, refugees as well as stateless people. To attain this goal, we work closely with Government counterparts at central and local levels and strengthen the role of communities who have stepped up since the onset of the war as first-line responders. Our work in support of a national system that protects contributes to the localization and greater sustainability of our protection response.

In 2025, **main Government counterparts** of UNHCR's protection programme are the Office of the President, the Ministry of Social Policy, its regional Departments of Social Protection and Centres for Social Service Provision, the Ministry of Development, the Ministry of Justice and its Free Legal Aid Centres and Civil Registries, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its consular services, the Ministry of National Unity, the State Migration Service and the State Border Guard Service of the Ministry of Interior as well as the National MHPSS Coordination Centre established under the auspices of the First Lady. In addition, UNHCR maintains close cooperation with the Office of Ombudsman of the Verkhovna Rada as well as with the Temporary Special Parliamentary Commission on IDPs.

## KEY HIGHLIGHTS – 2025/Q1

### Partnering with Ministry of National Unity to support forcibly displaced Ukrainians stay connected with home

On 7 March 2025, [UNHCR and the Ministry of National Unity of Ukraine signed a Memorandum of Understanding \(MoU\)](#) establishing a strategic partnership to support Ukrainians who have been forced to flee within Ukraine or abroad, maintain connections with their home country and communities, and attain durable solutions. UNHCR will work with the Ministry to develop legal and policy frameworks in line with international standards to enable durable solutions to displacement. The cooperation will also leverage the vital role of refugee and IDP-led organizations, IDP councils, community-based organizations and other civil society in fostering social and cultural connections, local participation, (re-)integration and cohesion. UNHCR will also support the Ministry with developing institutional and technical capacities, including supporting Unity Hubs with services, expanding digital information platforms such as the Ministry's Unity App and UNHCR's *Ukraine is Home* website, and cooperate to generate and analyse data on the socio-economic conditions, specific needs, vulnerabilities, and future intentions of forcibly displaced Ukrainians.

### Finding a Home Away from Home

In 2022, Yevhenia fled Sloviansk with her two children early on when the full-scale invasion started. She was forced out her home once before, in 2014. This time, however, she fled all the way to Poland as she feared that the war could engulf the entire country. Two years later, in 2024, she returned to Ukraine but was unable to return to her home that is now under temporary occupation. Instead, Yevhenia and her two children moved to Drohobych, in Lviv oblast, where she found a home away from home. Yevhenia found a job in the hromada, which has enabled her to take care of her and her children's needs. She also joined the local IDP Council to support others to integrate more easily in the community. "Community support has been invaluable to me when I was displaced. With my experience and capacity today, I can give back to the community and support others", she said.

### Empowering Civil Society - Open World Programme Participation

In March 2025, a six women strong Ukrainian delegation took part in the 10-day long [Open World Programme](#), funded by the US-congressional office for international leadership which connects delegates with their peers in US communities to promote international partnerships for peacebuilding and global security. Among the delegates were several UNHCR nominees representing civil society from Kyiv, Dnipro and Ternopil oblasts. Empowered by the rich experience, the delegates returned to Ukraine with a broader vision for community leadership and engagement. The exchange enabled them to learn about innovative ways of working by US organizations and institutions, which they now aim to adapt to their own work in Ukraine. Delegates also benefited from a wealth of new contacts, which they are already leveraging for fundraising, advocacy, and joint initiatives – demonstrating the value of peer exchange and cooperation across countries and organizations.



The six Ukrainian delegates in the US-congressional Open World Programme, several of them with a displacement experience, represent different civil society entities, including IDP-led and other such community-based entities and initiatives, IDP Councils as well as the Office of the Ombudsman of Ukraine. Several of them said that the participation in the Open World Programme gave them a platform to internationally advocate for Ukraine's displaced people.



## EVACUATIONS: LEAVING NOONE BEHIND

In the first quarter of 2025, displacement through evacuations continued in Sumy, Kharkiv, Dnipro, Donetsk, Zaporizka and Kherson oblasts, reported at over 77,000 people by local authorities. [Older people are often the last to leave](#) their homes and make up a sizable group – nearly 30 per cent – amongst those evacuated, adding to the growing number of older people in displacement estimated at over a quarter of the overall IDP population in Ukraine. [Others are not able to flee dangerous areas by themselves](#). This includes people living in institutions, but also others with continuous care needs. The Ministry of Social Policy estimates that this group consists of some 20,000 people. Two institutions, in Sumy and Dnipro, came already under attack in 2024. This group is at great risk of being left behind as their evacuation and relocation is particularly complex.



In Sumy Oblast, over 47,000 people had to evacuate as the security situation in frontline hromadas dramatically deteriorated. Of those 30 per cent are older people. In many instances, they are on their own having left behind the little they had, including their entire social support network. In the absence of suitable accommodation places and sufficient social service capacity, local authorities struggle to find solutions. Authorities in Sumy oblast are not alone. Dignified accommodation with continuous care services for older people and persons with disabilities remain one of the most critical gaps to enable the safe and dignified evacuation and relocation of older people and people with disabilities.

*UNHCR partner Proliska provides support to older people during evacuations from frontline hromadas and upon arrival at the transit site in Sumy City. © Taras Shevchenko, Proliska, March 2025.*

**Support for safe and dignified evacuations and relocations of older people and people with disabilities** from frontline areas and strengthening of social services relevant to their needs to enable continuous access to care in displacement situations, remains one of UNHCR's protection priorities in 2025, encompassing the following:

- **Evacuation and reception support:** UNHCR and its partners support the evacuation of older people and others with limited mobility, including through transportation and social accompaniment. In transit areas and areas receiving evacuees, our partners provide basic items, counselling, assistance in finding accommodation, psycho-social support and legal assistance, as well as onward transportation and case management.
- **Social services provision and capacity:** UNHCR continues its close cooperation with the Ministry of Social Policy and its Departments to strengthen social services most needed by displaced older people and people with disabilities, including those evacuated from frontlines. This includes [support to the Ministry's two sanatoria in Myrhorod and Truskavets](#), where assisted living, facility-based care and social adaptation services are provided, to contribute to the Ministry's vision to transform the sanatoria into temporary social services that can be used as reception facilities providing continuous care to newly displaced people.
- **Rehabilitation of premises for accommodation and social service provision:** To expand the availability of premises for accommodation with relevant social service provision, UNHCR with partners are rehabilitating up to 10 premises for assisted living and facility-based care, such as the recently opened assisted living facility in Stryh, Lviv oblast. The Protection and CCCM Clusters also coordinate the implementation of the recent UHF allocation supporting six Cluster partners to adapt 12 premises for assisted living and facility-based care and 130 collective sites offering places for 1,150 people with limited mobility.
- **Community-based support:** Community-based support to older people and people with disabilities is essential when they are evacuated and lose their usual social support network. Local civil society and trained community volunteers, such as UNHCR's social facilitators, support them with orientation in the new community and help the displaced people re-connect in a new environment, overcome social isolation and facilitate continued independent living.

Support for the safe and dignified evacuation and relocation of older people and people with disability requires humanitarian and recovery actors to work hand in hand. UNHCR, jointly with the Protection Cluster, remains an advocate with relevant stakeholders, including as part of the HCT's Centrality of Protection Strategy, to generate more support.

## PROTECTION AND SOLUTIONS MONITORING

UNHCR and its partners' protection and solutions monitoring activity is three-fold:

1. **Monitoring of the protection situation** of IDPs, returnees and other war-affected people in Ukraine, including as part of a Protection Cluster-led country-wide initiative as well as for thematic protection surveys. In addition, UNHCR and partners undertake legal monitoring to inform advocacy efforts.
2. **Border monitoring** at 30 international border crossing points between Ukraine and Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Moldova. Border monitors 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. In the first quarter of 2025, UNHCR's border monitors supported 2,646 people directly at the borders.
3. **Monitoring of intentions and perspectives of refugees from Ukraine, refugee returnees and IDPs** to inform people-centered planning, provision of information through the *Ukraine is Home* platform, and support to returnees as they pursue a durable solution.

The monitoring outcomes inform UNHCR's planning and programme and help identify those most in need. The outcomes are also shared through relevant coordination platforms to inform the wider humanitarian and recovery response.

## Key Monitoring Findings

The UNHCR-led Legal Aid Working Group of the Protection Cluster identified key **legal challenges** that IDPs, returnees and other war-affected people encountered in the first quarter of 2025. Among the challenges identified are difficulties in registering as an IDP and in accessing IDP allowances. People from the temporarily occupied territories also encountered challenges in establishing legal facts of birth or death, which can impede access to rights. Legal monitors also continue to identify challenges in registering house ownership when archives are destroyed. In addition, the legal bulletins summarize initial barriers to accessing the new rental subsidy scheme. Read more in the [legal aid bulletins](#) for [January](#), [February](#) and [March](#) 2025.

Overall, the levels of **cross-border mobility in the first three months of 2025** mirror those of 2024/Q1, with a notable yet temporary decline in cross-border mobility in February of both years. The downward trend in cross-border mobility observed in September 2024 further continued in 2025/Q1 with some 700K less border crossings than in 2024/Q4. Of those arriving to Ukraine, the majority of 66% planned to stay for a short duration of less than one month. They returned to Ukraine mostly for family-related reasons. Of those departing Ukraine, 10% were internally displaced prior to their departure and 17% note that they were leaving the country for the first time since the onset of the full-scale invasion. Safety and security concerns remain the dominant reason for departing Ukraine of nearly all those surveyed upon departure. On average, 70% of surveyed individuals were unsure about the period of their stay abroad, while an average of 60% indicate that they intend to return to Ukraine should the situation stabilize. Read more in our [border snapshots and dashboards](#).

The latest round of UNHCR's regional **intention survey** (July-August 2024) found that 61% of refugees hope or plan to return to Ukraine, a 4% decrease compared to the last intention survey of February 2024. Those undecided or not planning to return increased slightly by 3% and 1% respectively compared to six months ago. Return intentions of IDPs remain the same at 73%. See the results of UNHCR's most recent intention survey #6: [Lives on Hold: Intentions and perspectives of refugees, refugee returnees and internally displaced people from Ukraine](#)

## DONORS

UNHCR is grateful for the critical support provided by our top government donors and for the generous contributions from individuals and the private sector, as well as those who have contributed to UNHCR programmes with softly earmarked and unearmarked funds.



## FOR MORE INFORMATION:

- Visit Ukraine's **Operational Data Portal** for more information products [here](#).
- Visit UNHCR Ukraine's Website [here](#).

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Contact **UNHCR's Hotline 0-800-307-711** for feedback and advice on assistance and services.