

# Belarus

February 2023

**UNHCR mandate:** UNHCR has been 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 advocates for equal access to asylum and supports the Government of the Republic of Belarus in strengthening its asylum system, policies, and procedures.

**Ukraine situation:** UNHCR supports government-led efforts through a multisectoral response focused on protection services, cash assistance, coordination and emergency supplies.

## UNHCR POPULATION STATISTICS AS OF MID-2022\*

Refugees**	<b>12,547</b>
Asylum-seekers***	<b>780</b>
Stateless persons	<b>5,626</b>

\*\*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	<b>12,231</b>	Ukraine	<b>743</b>
Afghanistan	<b>96</b>	Syrian Arab Rep.	<b>12</b>
Syrian Arab Rep.	<b>59</b>	Cuba	<b>5</b>

\*UNHCR 2022 Mid-Year Trends and UNHCR [data finder](#)

## UKRAINE REFUGEE SITUATION RESPONSE

As per latest data as of mid-February, **20,235 refugees from Ukraine** were registered for temporary protection in Belarus

**Protection assistance:** UNHCR monitors access to territory, temporary stay, and asylum procedures. In 2022, 2,233 refugees were counselled by UNHCR and Refugee Counselling Service on asylum and regularization of stay, access to health, employment and education.

**Cash assistance:** UNHCR supported some 1,300 most vulnerable refugees, such as older people, people with serious medical needs, women at risk, single parents, and people with disabilities with emergency cash assistance.

**Essential items:** UNHCR provided 3,179 refugees with essential items, such as blankets, pillows, and bed linen.

**Coordination:** UNHCR leads and coordinates implementation of the refugee response in collaboration with relevant government counterparts, UN Agencies and NGOs.

## HIGHLIGHTS

### Protection monitoring and profiling

To strengthen and promote an evidence-based protection response to the Ukraine situation, UNHCR and its partners implement protection monitoring and profiling 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 by 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. UNHCR provided individual and social counselling to over 2,512 people in 2022, of whom 88 per cent were refugees from Ukraine. In addition, about 120 refugees from Ukraine, staying in temporary accommodation facilities in Gomel region, were reached with individual and group counselling on seeking asylum.



### SUPPORT FROM UNHCR HELPS IN THE TRANSITION INTO SELF-RELIANCE AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC INCLUSION

Liliya and her family had arrived in Belarus from Mariupol. In October, they received from UNHCR vouchers for school supplies and uniforms.

## Key Priorities

- **Access to territory and asylum:** UNHCR regularly monitors the situation of refugees and other people we serve. UNHCR provides remote and in-person asylum-related counselling, facilitates appointments for asylum application with the state authorities, liaises with the government counterparts, and assists with interpretation.
- **Asylum procedures:** UNHCR is working with the authorities to enhance the asylum system and the quality of state refugee status determination procedures through monitoring and capacity building.
- **Information:** To address critical gaps in access to information, UNHCR regularly updates its UNHCR HELP page for Belarus in five languages. The HELP page is linked to numerous information sites, including partners' platforms.
- **Protection and monitoring profiling:** UNHCR works with the Belarusian Red Cross in protection monitoring and profiling, thus strengthening data collection and referral mechanisms.
- **Cash assistance:** In 2022, UNHCR supported 1,575 asylum-seekers and refugees (approx. 1,300 from Ukraine and 275 other nationalities) with one-time cash-assistance, pending employment or inclusion in national social protection schemes.
- **Detention monitoring:** UNHCR and its legal partner visit detention facilities to counsel people who may need international protection.

## Working with Partners

- **Local partnerships:** UNHCR works in partnership with the the Department of Citizenship and Migration of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (DCM), the Ministries of Health, Education, Labour, and

Social Protection, and the State Border Committee to preserve the protection space and to foster socio-economic inclusion. UNHCR continues its partnerships with the Belarusian Red Cross and with the Refugee Counselling Service.

- **Inter-Agency Coordination:** UNHCR leads the coordination of the inter-agency refugee response and co-chairs the Refugee Coordination Forum with the DCM in support of the government-led response. Several technical forums are also operational to support implementation of the regional response plan.
- **The Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRP):** The 2023 RRP for Belarus and other host countries, was launched on 15 February 2023. The Response Plan for Belarus includes 6 partners appealing for some US\$14.7m.

## Statelessness

- Belarus is not party to the 1954 and 1961 Statelessness Conventions. The government pledges in October 2019 to accede to both Conventions are still pending.
- UNHCR and 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

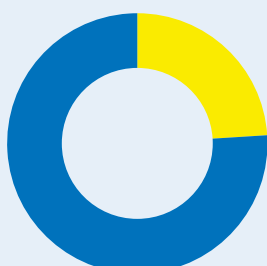
### Offices:

1 Representation Office in Minsk

## Financial information (February 2023)

### Financial requirements USD 4.3 M

**Funding gap**  
76%  
3.3 M



**Funded**  
24%  
1 M

UNHCR is grateful for the support from our top government donors of unearmarked, softly earmarked and earmarked funding:

**Australia | Austria | Belgium | Canada | Denmark | France | Germany | Ireland | Italy | Japan | Netherlands | Norway | Spain | Sweden | Switzerland | United Kingdom | United States of America**

As well as for the generous contributions from private individuals and the private sector.