

Poland

February 2022

UNHCR in Poland was established in 1992. Poland is signatory to the Refugee Convention and its Protocol. It is not, however, signatory to the Statelessness Conventions.

UNHCR advocates against **pushbacks of asylum-seekers** and calls for improving access to territory and asylum procedures.

The new Act on granting protection to foreigners further limits **access to territory and asylum**, especially for irregular arrivals.

POPULATION OF CONCERN*

| | |
|-----------------------------|--------------|
| Refugees | 3,166 |
| Asylum-seekers | 3,937 |
| Stateless persons | 1,389 |
| Total population of concern | 8,492 |

TOP THREE COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN*

| Refugees | | Asylum-seekers | |
|--------------------|-------|--------------------|-------|
| Russian Federation | 1,100 | Russian Federation | 2,492 |
| Ukraine | 417 | Belarus | 649 |
| Belarus | 398 | Ukraine | 270 |

*Data source: UNHCR 2020 Global Trends Report and UNHCR [data finder platform](#)

HIGHLIGHTS

1,732 people were in detention as of 31 December 2021 for entering Poland irregularly. Most were Afghans and Iraqis.

39,674 Number of attempted irregular entries, including repeat attempts by the same persons near the border with Belarus in 2021, as reported by Border Guard, compared to 129 in 2020

7,700 individual claims for international protection

were filed in Poland in 2021. Main nationalities: Belarus (2,257), Afghanistan (1,781) and Iraq (1,400)

2,155 people were granted refugee status or subsidiary protection in 2021

UKRAINE SITUATION

At the time of updating this fact sheet, in light of the rapidly deteriorating situation and war in Ukraine, UNHCR is ramping up its response and capacity in Ukraine and neighbouring countries, including in Poland.

UNHCR estimates that up to 4 million refugees may flee Ukraine, with more than 650,000 people having already crossed an international border in search of safety from 24 to 28 February.

UNHCR declared a Level 3 Emergency for Ukraine and a Level 2 Emergency for neighbouring countries on 25 February. UNHCR and OCHA jointly [launched](#) the [Humanitarian Flash Appeal](#) and the [Regional Refugee Response Plan](#) for the Ukraine situation on 1 March.

SITUATION AT THE POLAND-BELARUS BORDER



UNHCR's statements and appeals for humanitarian solutions: [24 August 2021](#), [22 September 2021](#), [22 October 2021](#) and [9 November 2021](#).

[News comment](#) by Christine Goyer, UNHCR Representative in Poland on legislative changes, 15 October 2021

Key Priorities

- **Access to territory:** UNHCR monitors directly and through its partner access to territory and asylum, including visits to Border Guard posts, to ensure that the right to asylum is effective and quality procedures are implemented. UNHCR aims to strengthen protection coordination among actors in Poland.
- **Asylum procedures:** UNHCR promotes quality refugee status determination procedures, provides free legal assistance to asylum-seekers via its partners, facilitates access to legal aid at the judicial appeal stage, and is developing physical and online informational resources.
- **Advocacy:** Amendments to the Act on Granting Protection to Foreigners entered into force, authorizing pushbacks and denial of international protection for those accessing territory irregularly (with limited exceptions), creating de facto two asylum-seeker categories and penalizing irregular entry.
- **Detention monitoring:** UNHCR promotes alternatives to detention in the migration context and the “no detention of children” policy. From August through December 2021, UNHCR visited 6 detention facilities and conducted participatory discussions with asylum-seekers. UNHCR is expanding its interventions through new legal and mental health and psychosocial support projects in 2022.
- **Complementary pathways:** UNHCR monitors access to higher education for students from refugee-producing countries and advocates with selected universities to increase opportunities for refugee students.
- **Integration:** Refugees’ rights are mainstreamed with the exception of voting rights. UNHCR supports teachers and social workers to improve the integration prospects of refugees.

Working with Partners

- **Government:** UNHCR works with the Ministry of Interior, responsible for asylum and migration issues; the Ministry of Family and Social Policy, responsible for integration of refugees; the Border Guard, on access to territory; and the Office for Foreigners regarding asylum procedures.
- **Other institutions:** UNHCR works with the Union of Polish Metropolises to enhance local integration. The Ombudsperson is a key partner as an independent institution monitoring human rights.
- **Civil society:** UNHCR works with NGOs providing legal counselling and integration support. UNHCR has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Warsaw Bar of Attorneys-at-Law to expand the network of lawyers providing legal aid.
- **External engagement:** UNHCR works to enable policy change in favour of asylum-seekers, refugees and stateless persons by engagement with decision-makers, Members of Parliament, NGOs, legal clinics, local authorities and persons of concern, through participatory activities, lectures, public events, meetings and networking.

Statelessness

- Poland is not a party to any of the Statelessness Conventions. There is no statelessness determination procedure, and the domestic framework needs to be adjusted to prevent situations of statelessness.
- UNHCR is engaging Members of Parliament to take on UNHCR’s recommendations made in its [2019 mapping](#) to address gaps identified.

UNHCR Presence in Poland

| Staff: | Offices: |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| 8 National Staff | 1 Representation |
| 4 International Staff | 1 Liaison Office to Frontex |

Financial information (22 February 2022)

Financial requirements

USD 1.3 M*

Funding gap 91%
1.2 M



Funded 9%
0.1 M

*This amount refers to the initial budget approved by UNHCR’s Executive Committee for 2022, prior to the latest hostilities in Ukraine.

UNHCR is grateful to the donors of unearmarked and softly earmarked contributions to the 2022 global programmes. Donors of USD 10 million or more are:

Sweden | Norway | Netherlands | Denmark | Germany | Switzerland | Belgium | Ireland

Unearmarked contributions provide UNHCR with vital flexibility in determining how best to protect and assist persons of concern who are in the greatest need or at the greatest risk.