

United Kingdom

February 2023

271,600 applications have been made for visas under the **UK's Ukrainian visa routes** as of February 2023. Over 219,400 visas have been issued, with 163,500 arrivals to date.

Through the **Quality Protection Partnership**, UNHCR supports authorities in asylum case processing. The government intends to **clear the existing asylum backlog** by end 2023.

The UK has also made 10,000 UNHCR resettlement places available under the **Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme** for the period from March 2022 to March 2027.

UNHCR POPULATION STATISTICS AS OF MID-2022*

Refugees	231,597
Asylum-seekers	127,421
Stateless persons	5,483

Top three countries of origin*

Refugees		Asylum-seekers	
Ukraine	91,223	Albania	15,893
Iran	21,904	Iran	15,395
Eritrea	15,615	Iraq	14,033

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

UKRAINE REFUGEE SITUATION RESPONSE

162,700 refugees from Ukraine had arrived in the United Kingdom, as per the UNHCR Ukraine Situation Data Portal on 15 February.

As of 21 February 2023, 115,800 had entered under the Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme, 47,800 through the Ukraine Family Scheme and 23,700 through the in-country Ukraine Extension Scheme. [See here](#) for a more detailed breakdown of the three schemes.

Information sharing and signposting: Although not involved in the schemes, UNHCR has responded to individual queries from Ukrainians and/or their sponsors, providing information on the schemes and referring to organisations and sources of information.

Accommodation visit: On 19 January, UNHCR carried out a visit to the MS Victoria, a cruise ship docked in Edinburgh and commissioned by the Scottish Government as short-term emergency accommodation for refugees from Ukraine who have arrived through the Super Sponsorship Scheme. The cruise hosts around 1,200 refugees.

HIGHLIGHTS

UNHCR appeals to UK to uphold its international legal obligations

On 13 December, UNHCR [expressed concern](#) at plans announced by the government to restrict access to asylum for *people* arriving irregularly. While the plans *include* positive reforms to clear the current longstanding backlog, further limiting access to asylum would go against the basic principles of international solidarity and responsibility-sharing upon which the Refugee Convention was founded.

UNHCR submits evidence to Parliamentary inquiry on the rights of asylum-seekers

On 25 January, UNHCR [gave oral evidence](#) to Parliament's Human Rights committee on the compliance of recent UK reforms with international law and the Refugee Convention.



SNAPSHOT ASSESSMENT ON UKRAINE VISA SCHEMES IN THE UK

On 29 September, UNHCR published '[Seeking Sanctuary](#)'. The report highlights the opportunities and challenges encountered under the two main Ukraine visa schemes, showcasing positive practices and making practical recommendations aimed at strengthening the UK's future large-scale responses.

Key Priorities

- **Reception monitoring:** On 10 January 2023, UNHCR undertook a visit to disembarkation and reception facilities at Dover as well as the Manston Short-Term Holding Facility.
- **Registration and screening:** UNHCR completed an audit of the UK's registration and screening procedures for asylum claimants, due to be published in the second quarter of 2022.
- **Litigation:** On 19 December, the UK High Court ruled that the UK's plans to remove asylum-seekers to Rwanda was lawful. In January, the claimants were granted the right to appeal. UNHCR has requested permission to continue our intervention in the case.
- **Asylum procedures:** UNHCR's Quality Protection Partnership (QPP) team, working with the Home Office 'Asylum Transformation' team, provided advice on expedited processing for certain profiles, on-the-paper decisions for manifestly founded cases, targeted interview tools and children's asylum casework.
- **Integration:** On 17 January, UNHCR held a roundtable meeting in Edinburgh with resettled refugee women from Syria and Iraq as well as Afghan refugee women evacuated to the UK. UNHCR has partnered with a Liverpool-based NGO, Refugee Women Connect, to deliver digital literacy training.
- **Advocacy:** UNHCR has recently submitted evidence to parliamentary committee inquiries on 'The UK-Rwanda Memorandum of Understanding', 'Family Migration', 'Human Rights of Asylum Seekers', 'UK aid for refugee host countries' and 'Horn of Africa: Hunger.'

- **Detention monitoring:** UNHCR carried out monitoring missions to three immigration removal centres between September and December as part of regular monitoring visit.

Working with Partners

- On 21 October, UNHCR held a '**Strategic Dialogue**' with the FCDO in London. On 28 December, the Assistant High Commissioner for Protection delivered an address to a conference on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict hosted by the UK Government.
- On 5 December, UNHCR met with the Welsh Government, NGOs, asylum-seekers and refugees in Wales. On 7 December, UNHCR addressed a meeting of the UK Parliament's 'Migration' and 'Eritrea' interest groups on the situation in Libya.
- On 13 December, UNHCR **issued a statement** in response to the Prime Minister's announcement on asylum reforms. On 19 December, UNHCR **issued a comment** following a UK High Court decision on the UK-Rwanda MEDP. A further **news comment** on expedited asylum processing was issued on 23 February 2023.

Statelessness

- The UK ratified the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons in 1959 and the 1961 Convention in 1966. A **Statelessness Determination Procedure** (SDP) was established in 2013.
- On 15 November, UNHCR trained Home Office staff on the causes and consequences of statelessness.

UNHCR Presence in United Kingdom

Staff:

12 National Staff
5 International Staff

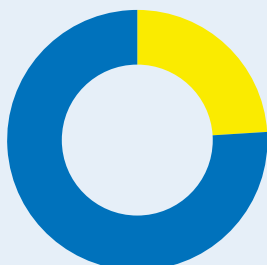
Offices:

1 Country Office in London

Financial information (February 2023)

Financial requirements USD 3M

Funding gap
74%
2.3M



Funded
24%
0.7M

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