

Poland

September 2021

UNHCR in **Poland** was established in 1992. Poland is signatory to the Refugee Convention and its Protocol in 1991. It is not however signatory of the Statelessness Conventions.

UNHCR receives credible reports on **possible pushbacks**, especially to Belarus, and works with different actors to confirm such reports.

A new draft law is likely to limit **access to territory and asylum**, especially for irregular arrivals. UNHCR shared its observations with authorities and MPs (link below).

POPULATION OF CONCERN*

Refugees	2,811
Asylum-seekers	3,602
Stateless persons	1,390
Total population of concern	7,803

TOP THREE COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN*

Refugees		Asylum-seekers	
Russian Federation	1,052	Russian Federation	2,419
Ukraine	416	Ukraine	305
Syria	237	Belarus	304

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

COVID-19 PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

Advocacy: UNHCR advocates for the full inclusion of persons of concern in socio-economic support programs and the national vaccination scheme, which exists in theory, but challenges are noted in practice.

Inclusion: Asylum-seekers and refugees are included in the national vaccination program.

Communication with Communities: FAQ on COVID-19 for persons of concern is available [here](#) in three languages.

Health: UNHCR monitors effective access to health care for persons of concern. When obstacles are identified, they are addressed with Polish authorities to find adequate solutions.

HIGHLIGHTS

1,200 Number of people placed in detention since August for entering Poland in an irregular way. Most of them are Afghans and Iraqis. Last year this number was 739.

2,500 Number of irregular crossing near the border with Belarus as reported by Polish Border guards since August. It's a ten-fold increase compared to 2020.

1,683 asylum claims were filed in Poland between 1 January and 31 August. In 2020, Poland registered 2,803 claims.

723 people were granted refugee status or subsidiary protection between 1 January and 31 August.

CHECHEN REFUGEE'S MISSION



A **story of Khedi Alieva**, a refugee from Chechnya, who is now running The Kitchen of Conflict – a famous bistro in central Warsaw.

Observations on the draft law on granting foreigners protection in the territory of Poland

Key Priorities

- **Access to territory:** UNHCR monitors directly and through partner access to territory and asylum to ensure that the right to asylum is effective and quality procedures are implemented.
- **Asylum procedures:** UNHCR promotes quality refugee status determination procedures, provides free legal assistance to asylum-seekers in-country and at border points via its partner, and facilitates access to legal aid at the judicial appeal stage.
- **Advocacy:** UNHCR shares guidelines and policies with authorities and provides comments to key documents such as Migration Policy. UNHCR promotes changes in the legal framework on integration for refugees. UNHCR published [legal observations](#) on the draft legislation on access to asylum, arguing that, if passed, the law will be inconsistent with Poland's international obligations.
- **Detention Monitoring:** UNHCR promotes alternatives to detention in migration context and the "no detention of children" policy. Through its partner, UNHCR made 17 monitoring visits to detention centres between 1 January and 30 June.
- **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. UNHCR advocates for efficient and flexible family reunification procedures
- **Integration:** Refugees' rights are mainstreamed with the exception for 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 Family and Social Policy, responsible integration of

refugees; with the Polish Border Guard on access to territory; and with the Office for Foreigners regarding asylum procedures.

- **Other institutions:** UNHCR works with the Union of Polish Metropolises to enhance local integration. Ombudsman is a key partner as an independent institution monitoring human rights, including of Persons of Concern.
- **Civil society:** UNHCR works with legal counselling NGOs (Halina Nieć Legal Aid Centre, Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights, Foundation for Somalia, Polish Hospitality Foundation, Rule of Law Institute). UNHCR has a MoU with the Warsaw Bar of Attorneys-at-Law to expand the network of lawyers providing legal support.
- **External Engagement:** UNHCR works to enable policy change in favour of asylum-seekers, refugees and the stateless by contacts with decision-makers, MPs, 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 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 in its [2019 mapping](#) to address some of the gaps identified.

UNHCR Presence in Poland

Staff:

8 National Staff
3 International Staff

Offices:

1 Representation in Warsaw
1 Liaison Office to Frontex

Financial information (28 September 2021)

Financial requirements

USD 0.9 M

Funding gap
48%
0.4 M



Funded
52%
0.5 M

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UNHCR Poland is grateful to the donor to its 2021 programme: **Poland**