

Russian Federation

March 2023

Presence: The UN Refugee Agency has been working in the Russian Federation since 1992. It currently operates through a Country Office located in Moscow.

Legal Framework: The Russian Federation is party to the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol. The national refugee law was adopted in 1993.

As of 31 March 2023, **276 refugees**, **53,719 temporary asylum status holders** and **2,894 asylum-seekers** from 71 countries are registered by the Russian Ministry of the Interior (Mol).

KEY FIGURES

2,852,395*

refugees and displaced persons from Donetsk, Luhansk and other regions of Ukraine arrived in Russia from 24 February to 4 October 2022

**Latest figures to date are provided by EMERCOM of Russia - pending update*

27,010

refugees and displaced persons from Donetsk, Luhansk and other regions of Ukraine were provided with counselling by UNHCR and its partners, either in person or over the phone since January 2023

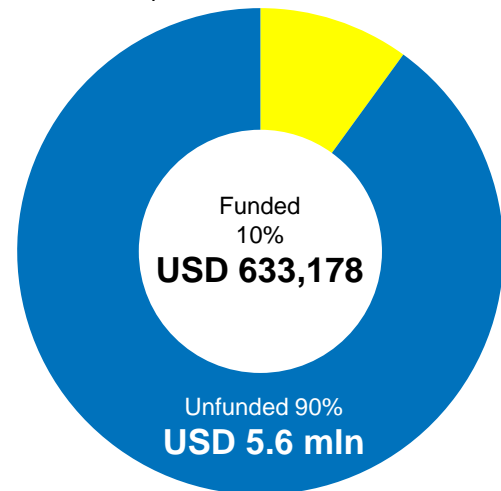
3,236

refugees from Ukraine were provided with psychosocial support by UNHCR partner Russian Red Cross in Belgorod, Vladimir, Volgograd, Voronezh, Kursk, Lipetsk, Rostov and Moscow regions and Republic of Tatarstan since January 2023

FUNDING (AS OF 28 MARCH 2023)

USD 6.2 million

requested for the operation in Russia in 2023



UNHCR Russia staff meeting with Ukrainian students, Ekaterinburg. © UNHCR/Magdalena Aguilar Pulido



Roundtable with students of the Diplomatic Academy at the UN House, Moscow © UNHCR/Maria Vediakova

Highlights

- **Refugee focus group discussions.** From March 13-17, UNHCR and its partners took part in several focus group discussions with displaced persons focused on the protection situation and needs and challenges of the refugees and asylum seekers in Russia.
Some meetings were held online to cover more regions of Russia. A total of 100 people, divided into groups according to age, gender, country of origin, language, and legal status, attended the meetings. Refugees and asylum-seekers from Afghanistan, CAR, Cameroon, DRC, Ethiopia, Mali, Nigeria, Syria, and Uzbekistan took part in these focus group discussions.
- **Missions to Temporary Accommodation Points (TAPs) in Yekaterinburg and Sverdlovsk region.** From March 21-23, UNHCR visited Yekaterinburg and three towns in the Sverdlovsk region together with the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights in Russia. During the mission, three TAPs for refugees from Ukraine were visited. The TAPs are located in different types of facilities: a sanatorium, a hotel and a dormitory, each one in a different town in Sverdlovsk region. A total of 258 persons are accommodated in these TAPs, most of the refugees surveyed by UNHCR were from Kherson and arrived starting from January 2023. UNHCR spoke with refugees about their conditions of stay, needs and concerns.
- UNHCR also visited the Ural Federal University to meet with students from Ukraine and the regional branch of the Russian Red Cross to meet with refugees from Ukraine staying outside of the TAPs to become familiar with the services and response provided. Among the top concerns of the refugees were issues related to access to pension allowances, one-time payments, and compensation for destroyed/damaged property. Separate meetings were held with local NGOs and authorities.
- **Monitoring visits to DAFI students' education institutions.** On March 21, UNHCR conducted visits to the Medical College #1 and the College of Business and Design where two first year DAFI students from Afghanistan are studying. The purpose of the visits was to introduce the role of UNHCR linked to the DAFI programme which sponsors the students. UNHCR met with academics and management staff to ensure that lines of communication are available to address concerns and collaborate in student monitoring as well as to observe the state of the facilities. Both colleges offer a variety of opportunities for students who are able and willing to engage in volunteer work. The administration of colleges and UNHCR agreed to remain in touch on any issues the DAFI students may face.
- **Professional orientation session for refugees.** On March 23-24, UNHCR's NGO partner "Health and Life" organized a career orientation session for youth. Over two days, 20 teenagers from Afghanistan and Syria visited the Moscow Employment Centre, where they took a career guidance test and learned about available training options. Based on the results of the test, teenagers were able to analyse their priorities and identify career directions. The staff of the Employment Centre provided counselling on employment opportunities during the summer period. In addition, the partner organized employment counselling for three adults from Afghanistan, who received information about vacancies and contacts of employers.
- **Monthly partners' meeting.** On March 27, UNHCR Russia held a monthly meeting with NGO partners and the Ombudsman's Office. Partners mentioned receiving complaints from non-Ukrainian refugees on the need to undergo costly medical certification to renew temporary asylum certificates. Many people, especially families with children, cannot afford such costs and rely on UNHCR and partners' assistance. An increasing number of Ukrainian refugees are approaching NGO partners for legal support to receive government benefits, entitlements, and compensation for lost property. The partners in Moscow and St. Petersburg are also addressing the demand for seasonal clothes and household items using charitable donations and non-UNHCR funds.
- **Roundtable with students of the Diplomatic Academy at the UN House.** On March 28, UNHCR Russia organized a roundtable discussion for university students devoted to the current challenges of forced displacement in the world and its humanitarian dimension. A total of 20 students of the Diplomatic Academy of the MFA of Russia studying international law, political science and international relations were invited to the UN House in Moscow to share their thoughts on the legal framework of refugee protection after several comprehensive briefings on the topic by UNHCR in 2022. UNHCR Russia also informed the future decision makers of the Global Refugee Forum planned for December 2023.
- **Local Integration.** Two refugees from Afghanistan and four refugees from Uzbekistan residing in Moscow were granted citizenship of the Russian Federation in March 2023. Prior to the acquisition of Russian citizenship, all had various legal statuses in Russia and received legal assistance from UNHCR partners.

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