

Russian Federation

January-February 2024

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 December 2023, **244 refugees**, **17,308 temporary asylum status holders** and **8,548 asylum-seekers** were registered by the Ministry of the Interior (Moi) of the Russian Federation.

KEY FIGURES ON UKRAINIAN REFUGEES

1,212,585*

refugees and displaced persons from Donetsk, Luhansk and other regions of Ukraine recorded in Russia as of 30 June 2023

UNHCR missions in 2024: 1 mission carried out to 1 region (Tatarstan).

UNHCR and partners response in 2024:

7,904 refugees used the telephone counselling/hotline of UNHCR and Partner NGOs.

7,732 refugees provided with psychosocial support and psychological first aid.

5,649 refugees received protection services in border regions (Kursk, Belgorod, Voronezh, Rostov).

2,704 refugees received protection services in other Russian regions (including Moscow and Saint Petersburg).

UNHCR missions in 2022-2024:

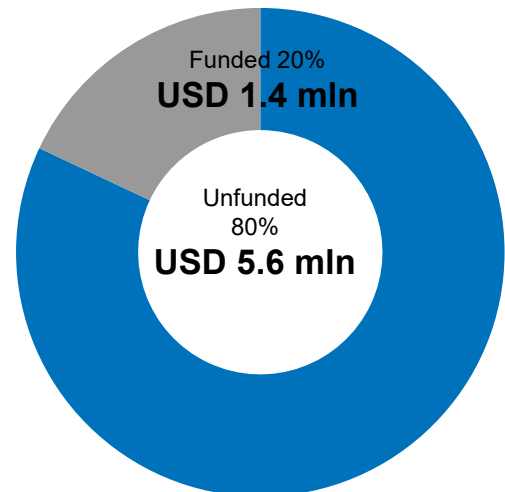
48 missions in 33 regions.

**Data source: UNHCR [collation of statistics](#) made available by the authorities*

FUNDING (AS OF 29 FEBRUARY 2024)

USD 7.0 million

requested for the operation in Russia in 2024



Yemeni refugee, Mawaddah, performing in show "Threads" by Upsala-Circus while on tour in Moscow © Upsala-Circus



UNHCR delivering a lecture for students-participants of Model United Nations at the Diplomatic Academy of the Russian MFA © MUN organizers

- **Conference on the Common Migration Space of CIS nations.** On 20 February, the UNHCR Representative participated in the conference "The Concept of Common Migration Space of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) Member States: Common Principles and National Interests" in Saint Petersburg. UNHCR advocated for approaches for addressing mixed population movements that ensure protection sensitive border management and non-penalization of asylum-seekers for irregular entry or presence, as well as refugees' access to a fair and efficient asylum procedure. UNHCR also highlighted the importance of ensuring access to rights and having comprehensive national programs to support the inclusion of asylum-seekers and refugees. The conference was part of the VIII St. Petersburg International Labour Forum.
- **Mission to Ivanovo region.** From 19 to 21 February, UNHCR met with refugees from Afghanistan who reside in the Ivanovo region. Twelve men and six women from Afghanistan attended the sessions. The issue of legal status along with language and economic challenges were mentioned among the most serious concerns by men. Women mentioned difficulties to access psychological, social, and financial support.
- **Focus group discussions in Moscow and Moscow region.** From 20 to 29 February, UNHCR and its partners held participatory assessment sessions with refugees in Moscow. Two online meetings with Syrian refugees residing in the Moscow region also took place. Refugees from Ukraine, Afghanistan, Syria, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, Yemen, Cameroon, and other countries attended the meetings. A total of 135 people, including 56 men and 79 women participated. Older people from Ukraine reported insufficient financial resources due to the high cost of rent, medicines, transportation, and minimal pensions because of difficulties in obtaining confirmation of employment history from Ukraine. Some participants raised concerns related to denial of asylum and hampered access to registration at the place of stay and residence due to unwillingness of landlords to register foreigners at their apartments. They also discussed challenges in access to education, formal employment, medical care, and the need for free Russian language classes, as well as financial constraints. Individuals in need of legal assistance were referred to partners, while Russian-language and socio-economic support will be addressed to the extent possible through partnerships. UNHCR continues to raise barriers to socio-economic inclusion with the relevant national authorities.
- **Focus group discussions in Saint Petersburg.** On 27 February, UNHCR held focus group discussions and individual counselling with refugees from Ukraine, State of Palestine, Syria, Yemen, and Afghanistan in Saint Petersburg. 35 people attended the meetings. Refugees mentioned the following needs: Russian language classes, assistance with regularization of legal stay and integration, including obtaining residence permits, support with employment, preparation for school exams, access to education, and medical care. Possibilities of community engagement and refugee-led organizations were discussed to identify refugee capacities and resources and contribute to UNHCR planning activities.
- **Mission to Kazan, Tatarstan Republic.** From 26 to 29 February, UNHCR visited Kazan, the capital of the Republic of Tatarstan. UNHCR met with 9 refugees from Ukraine. Many refugees are unable to obtain temporary registration at their place of stay because of the reluctance of landlords to do so. Some refugees are only able to receive pensions for service completed up to 1991 but not afterwards due to the difficulties in obtaining employment records from Ukraine. UNHCR also met with 19 asylum-seekers from Afghanistan, Syria, and other countries. Many of them have not received temporary asylum status, however, some have received a permanent residence permit and obtain free medical assistance from the government. Young refugees expressed a desire to continue their higher education in Russia but need additional financial support to do so.
- **DAFI education engagement.** In February, UNHCR visited Saratov, to assess the educational performance and progress of one female student supported by the DAFI programme. The student is enrolled in the Engels Medical College of St. Luke (Voino-Yasenetsky). During the visit, UNHCR met with the student and a college professor. Regular contacts are maintained with the student to assess her progress and provide support as needed.
- **Model United Nations at the Diplomatic Academy of the Russian MFA.** In February, UNHCR supported the Model United Nations (MUN) at the Diplomatic Academy of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Moscow, as guests of honour and lecturers. On 5 February, the UNHCR Representative delivered a speech at the opening ceremony, while on 9 February, UNHCR made a presentation on refugee protection mechanisms. High school students and students of Russian and foreign universities from 18 countries took part in the conference.
- **Story of a young circus artist from Yemen in St. Petersburg.** In February, UNHCR published on its website and social media a story about a Yemeni refugee teenager, Mawaddah, who is currently living and studying at school thanks to the efforts of UNHCR partner NGO in St. Petersburg. She is also studying at a circus school and occasionally performs alongside adult circus artists in different parts of Russia. In the past, Mawaddah attended Russian language courses funded by UNHCR. She managed to integrate well in the Russian society, however, she and her family still face difficulties in acquiring a more stable legal status other than Temporary Asylum, which they need to extend every year.

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