



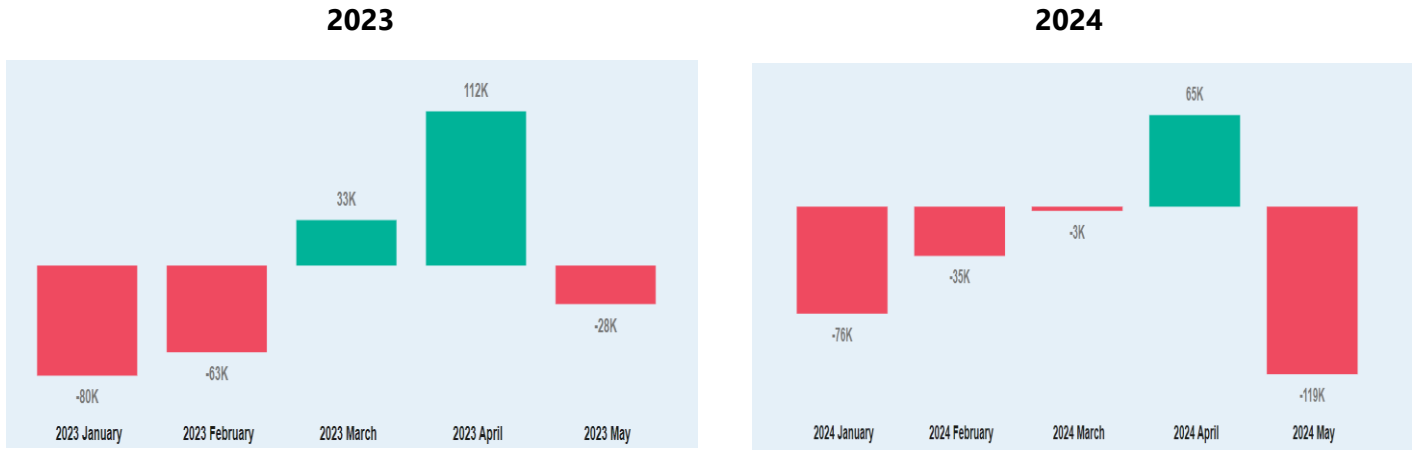
**UNHCR UKRAINE BORDER MONITORING**  
**AT INTERNATIONAL BORDER CROSSING POINTS**  
(Borders between Ukraine, the EU and Moldova)  
**MAY 2024**

*Queues of people and cars at different BCPs leaving the country in mid-May 2024. © Right to Protection.*

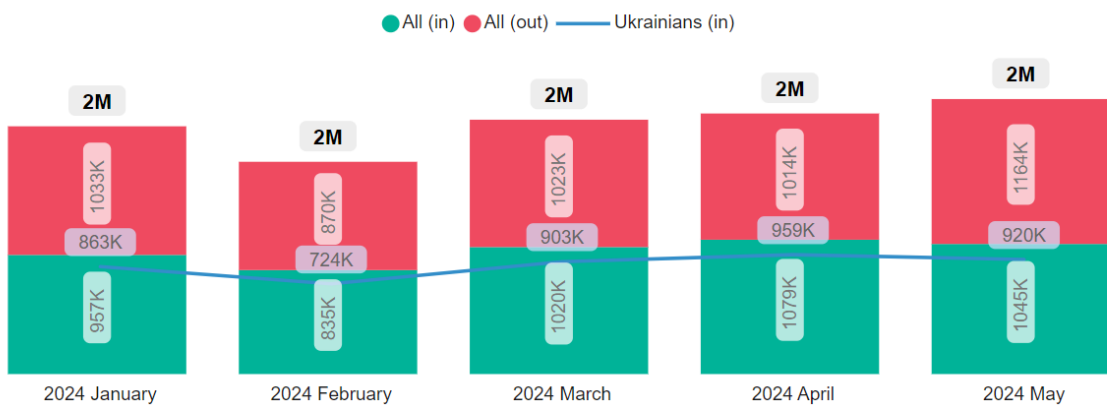
Since mid-March 2022, UNHCR and its local NGO partners Right to Protection (R2P), NEEKA, and The Tenth of April (TTA), have conducted border monitoring at 30 crossing points between Ukraine and Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Moldova. The border monitoring teams provide information, legal assistance, protection counselling and social support to people leaving Ukraine to seek international protection as well as to those returning to Ukraine.

**1. Overview: Cross-Border Movements (in and out)**

### Net inflows & outflows: 2023 and 2024 in comparison



### Ukraine western border movement (in and out)



After the initial decrease in cross-border movements from January to February, from March to May, the overall number of border crossings (in and out) increased steadily by month. While in March and April, an increase in the number of crossings in both directions was observed, in May, there was a slight decrease in the number of entries (~34K) and a considerable increase of exits (~150K). This is likely related to the entry into force of the mobilization law on 18 May 2024.

Figure 1 and Figure 2: Number of people crossing international borders with Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and Romania. The figure does not include data on border crossings with Moldova. Source: State Border Guard Service (SBGS) of Ukraine.

When comparing the January to May period between 2023 and 2024, there are similarities and differences in trends in net in- and outflows.

- There was a similar outflow during the winter months of January and February, albeit with higher numbers of departures in 2023 (~143K net outflow) compared to 2024 (~111K net outflow).

- The spring patterns however show important differences. In 2023, the inflow to Ukraine followed a hard winter with energy blackouts and reached ~145K arrivals in March and April (net inflow). In March and April 2024, the combined bi-monthly number of arrivals is considerably lower than a year ago (~62K), with departures even outweighing arrivals in March 2024, which was not the case in March 2023. Comparing population mobility trends for April, while there were more arrivals than departures in both years, the net inflow in 2024 was 47K lower than in 2023.
- An analysis of intentions of interviewed individuals regarding their duration of stay anticipated already suggested an increase in departures for May 2024. While departures were higher than arrivals in May of both years, the outflow in May 2024 is substantially higher (~91K) with a net outflow of 119K. The surge in departures in May 2024 can be attributed to several factors: (1) Departures following the Easter holidays; (2) The impact of the amendments to the mobilization law which took effect on 18 May 2024. Its provisions among modified border crossing regulations for certain population groups; (3) The impact of the escalations in Kharkivska and Sumska oblasts as of 10 May.

### Mobilization law & cross-border movements in May 2024

Mobilization and conscription related legal amendments introduced additional requirements for Ukrainian men (18-60 years of age) wishing to depart Ukraine even with valid grounds: crossing of the border now requires to have all military registration documents valid and up to date. This requirement concerns all men within the prescribed age range irrespective of whether exemption provisions apply (e.g. exemption due to family situation and responsibilities, health status or other exemption provisions). Conscripts, persons liable for military service and military reservists are obliged to undergo military registration and/or update their registration, even where such an obligation did not exist before. This concerns mostly Ukrainian men within the prescribed age range with permanent residence permits in other countries as well as holders of multiple citizenships who were excluded from military registration before.

## 2. Key findings of the monitoring

### General observations

Travelers with Temporary Protection (TP) status: According to interviews conducted during border crossings between January and May 2024, the vast majority of respondents entering (88%) and departing (83%) Ukraine are TP status holders. The top three countries for TP status holders travelling to and from Ukraine are Poland, Romania, and Slovakia. This suggests a relatively high level of cross-border mobility of Ukrainians with TP status in particular with these three neighbouring countries.

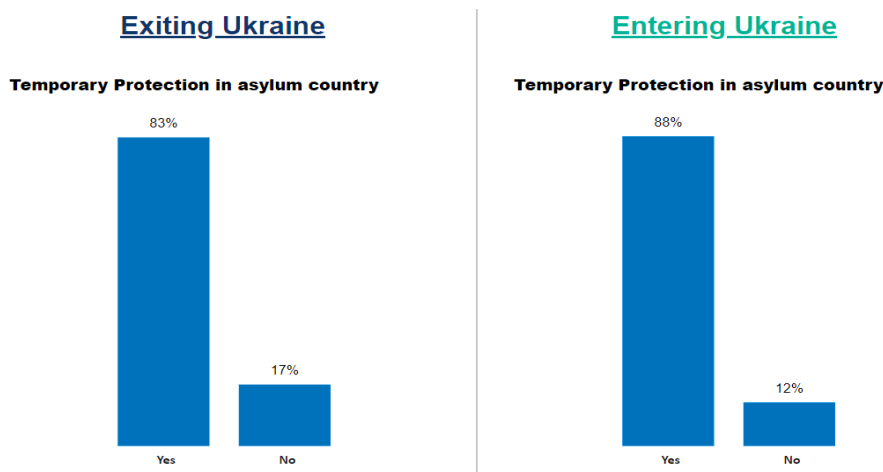


Figure 3: Data based on UNHCR border monitoring 2024.

Reasons to leave the country: The main factors cited by people for leaving the country in 2024 continues to be the deterioration of the security situation, with 98.21% of respondents reporting this concern across the reporting period. In contrast, during the same period in 2023, only 34.61% of respondents noted security concerns as a reason for leaving. There is noticeable increase in departures due to forced conscription risks, even though monitors inform that people prefer not to name this reason during interviews. While in January 2024, 0.43% of respondents cited conscription risks as reason for leaving, the figure has risen to 3.06% by the end of May 2024. Of note is also a small uptake in departures related to lack of access to social services in May 2024 compared to March and April 2024.

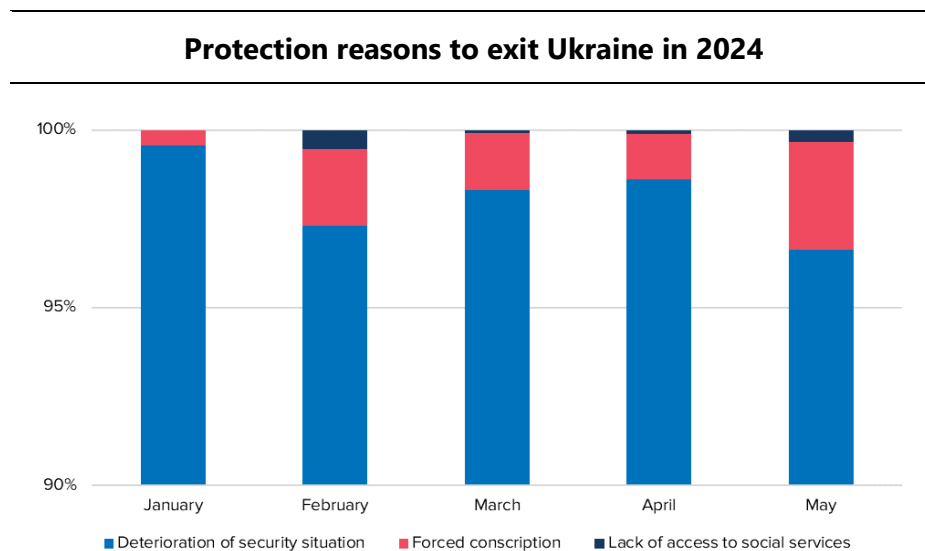


Figure 4: Data based on UNHCR border monitoring 2024.

### Public information by the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine (SBGS) on cross-border movements

- In the middle of May 2024, The SBGS [on its webpage](#) stated its observations of a significant rise in cross-border movement with the number of people leaving the country outweighing the number of people entering Ukraine. Consequently, waiting time to cross the border increased on both sides of the border. This is also confirmed by the observations of UNHCR partners' border monitors.
- Numerous intercepted attempts to cross the border irregularly by men of conscription age continuous to be reported on the SBGS website almost daily. Additionally, in May, the SBGS reported ten deaths of men attempting to irregularly cross the border via the Tysa river. This highlights a tragic trend of increasing fatalities when attempting to cross via this river.

### SOUNDBITES FROM THE BORDERS

The following are key observations by UNHCR partners' border monitors for the month of May 2024:

- Monitors in Lvivska oblast reported the establishment of checkpoints within the five-kilometer zone along the border. At these checkpoints manned by border guards and representative of the military commissariats, personal documents and grounds for border crossing or being present in the five-kilometer border zone are checked. A similar development was reported for Odeska oblast, with additional checkpoints established along the road leading to the BCP.
- A noticeable increase in outward movement of mothers with children was observed in the first two weeks of May in Zakarpatska oblast. According to monitors, this was driven by local rumors about the impossibility to cross the border

for mothers with children without a power of attorney from the father. Due to the limitation in provision of counseling services for men of conscription age, women were afraid of potential border crossing issues with their children. The peculiarity of the group leaving was that men are already abroad, employed or otherwise staying long-term. The concern was the loss of direct contact between family members.

- Partners observed a small increase in the number of families from Kharkivska and Sumska oblasts leaving the country for the first time.
- Partners observed 14 cases of unaccompanied and separated children departing Ukraine during the reporting month, most of whom were students abroad. One case involved a 15-year-old boy attempting to cross the border on a bus without his parents, with the bus driver holding a power of attorney. However, the boy was denied departure due to border crossing regulations for children under 16 years. He was left at the BCP from where border monitors escorted him to Lviv and enabling him to board a bus home. The parents confirmed the safe arrival of their child.

### 3. Support provided at the border crossings in May 2024

In April 2024, UNHCR partners, R2P, NEEKA and TTA, conducted 305 monitoring visits to the BCPs with Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Moldova. During these visits, UNHCR's partners provided different forms of support to **1,234 individuals** who crossed the border. This support included a range of services, including 1,128 instances of protection counseling and 229 instances of legal assistance, while 52 persons received social accompaniment.

In total in 2024, from January to May 2024, UNHCR partners supported **6,700 individuals** crossing the borders.

#### Note on Methodology

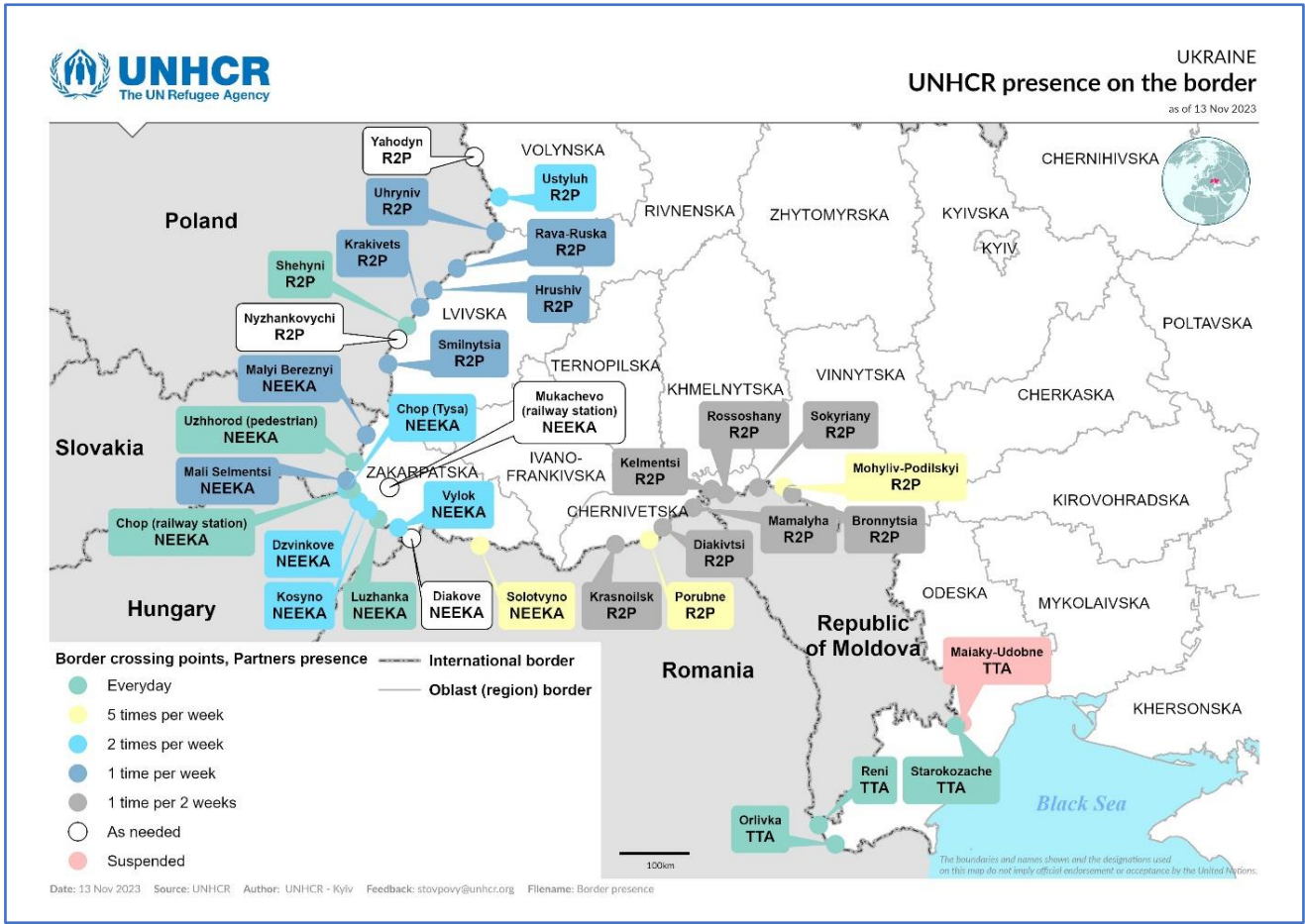
**From January to May 2024, a total of 16,221 people were surveyed by UNHCR partners at the borders. In May 2024, UNHCR partners surveyed 3,162 people (comprising 65% females 18-59 years of age, 15% males 18-59 years of age, 8% females 60+ years of age, 10% males 60+ years of age, 1% females 0-17 years, 1% males 0-17 years and 7% persons with disabilities).**

Since mid-March 2022, UNHCR has deployed border monitoring teams through local NGO partners to provide information and assistance to people crossing the border with EU countries (Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania) and Moldova. These teams provide information, legal assistance, protection counselling and social support to people leaving Ukraine to seek international protection, as well as to those returning to the country.

Border monitoring teams conduct individual interviews with people who are exiting and entering Ukraine. The purpose of these interviews is to gather information about the individual circumstances, reasons for moving and their protection needs. The border monitoring methodology is focused on assessing and responding to the protection and humanitarian needs of people crossing the border between Ukraine and the EU countries and Moldova. By conducting interviews, gathering data, and providing necessary support, the goal is to enhance protection measures and ensure the well-being of those who are on the move.

The monitoring findings are based on individual interviews conducted with people crossing the border, both those entering and exiting Ukraine, and other observations made by the border monitoring teams.





### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

- See Border Snapshot for March 2024 [here](#), April 2024 [here](#).
- Visit Ukraine's Operational Data Portal for more information products [here](#).
- Visit UNHCR Ukraine's Website [here](#).

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