



Passengers waiting for the passport control procedure at Chop railway station to proceed abroad, October 2024. © Neeka.

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 border 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)

In 2024 thus far, cross-border mobility reduced compared to 2023. From January to October 2024, the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine recorded 23.7 million border crossings, some 800K less crossings than during the same period in 2023. The reduced cross-border mobility trends that set in in September, with a steep drop in border crossings, continued in October 2024. This is likely associated with the end of the holiday season in August and the advent of fall and winter.

Ukraine western border movement (in and out)

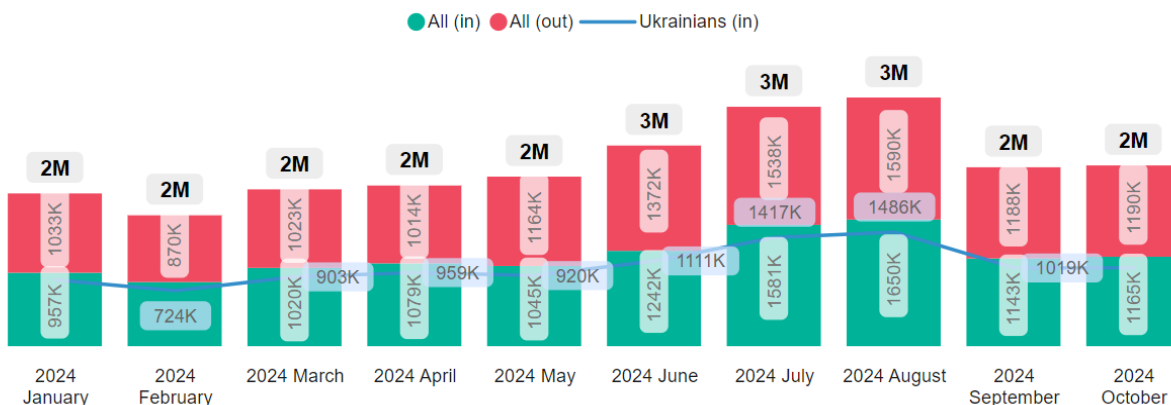


Figure 1: Number of people crossing international borders with Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and Romania. The figure does not include data on border crossings with Moldova. Source: State Border Guard Service (SBGS) of Ukraine.

2. Key monitoring findings

In October 2024, the net outflow was higher than the net inflow, with 25,000 more people departing Ukraine than arriving. Of those departing the country, 25% reported to leave Ukraine for the first time since the beginning of the full-scale invasion by Russia. 60% of those departing were unsure about the duration of stay abroad. Yet, 56% of respondents said that they intend to return should the situation stabilize.

Of those returning to Ukraine in October 2024, the vast majority of 85% arrived for short-term visits only:

- **Intended duration of stay in Ukraine.** In 2024 thus far, the border monitoring observed a relatively stable pattern in the duration of stay among those entering Ukraine. From January to October 2024, short-term stays dominated at 84%, while 9% of those arriving said they planned to stay for more than 1 month and 7% of arrivals planned to stay permanently. Border monitoring findings of October 2024 align with these trends.
- **Reasons for return to Ukraine:** In October 2024, the top three reasons for returning to Ukraine were: reuniting with family (34%), difficulties in accessing healthcare in the host country (22%) and checking on the properties left behind (15%). Another consistent reason for return throughout 2024 was taking care of relatives in Ukraine, reported at 12% in October. Factors such as the high cost of living in the host country, lack of livelihood opportunities, and uncertainty about legal status abroad were mentioned only by 1% of respondents each.
- **Main needs upon return to Ukraine:** Two major needs were mentioned: access to medicine and cash assistance. While employment, childcare and specific social services for older people were also mentioned, these needs were cited by a much smaller share of respondents, likely a reflection of the short-term nature of most returns.

Main reasons to return

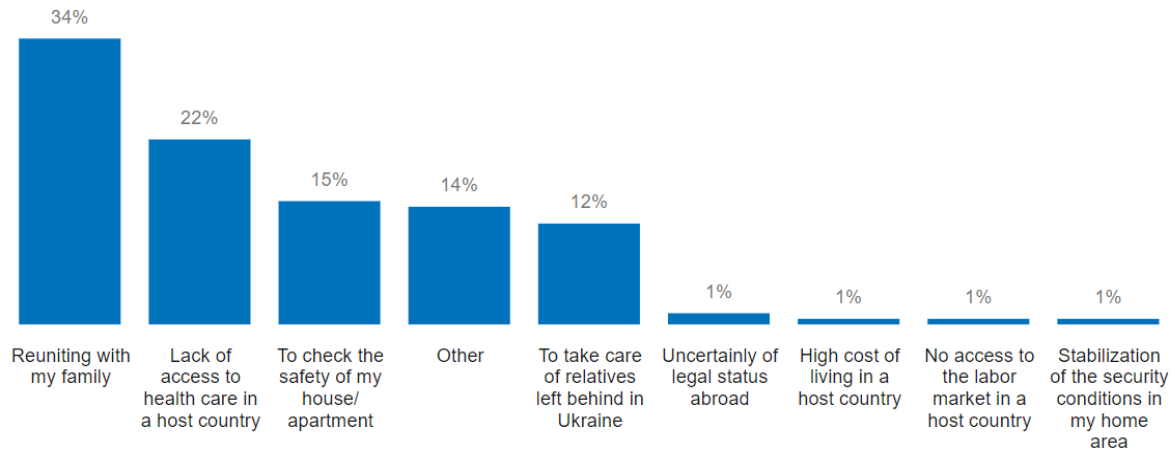


Figure 2: Main reasons for return in October 2024. Data based on UNHCR border monitoring 2024.

3. Public information by the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine on cross-border movements

- The trend of irregular border crossing attempts by men of conscription age continues. In October, the SBGS publicly reported on such attempts, including two particularly notable cases involving [19](#) and [14 men](#) respectively.
- The SBGS reported a [case](#) of a man of conscription age trying to return to Ukraine through the green border after failing to find employment in the EU. He had left the country irregularly.
- In October 2024, the SBGS publicly reported seven cases of arresting smugglers organizing illegal border crossings for conscription-aged men.
- According to the SBGS, men of conscription age are increasingly attempting to cross the border using various tactics, including marriages to women with disability status group I or II, forging documents confirming military service exemptions, and—newly reported—falsifying children's birth certificates to avoid conscription and enable border crossing.

SOUNDBITES FROM THE BORDERS

- Border monitors noted an increase in people leaving for winter season, indicating a plan to return after the season is over. In October 2024, 25% of those departing report to do so due to lack of access to energy-related services, including electricity, heating and water.
- Border monitors saw an uptake in departing Ukrainians from Dnipropetrovska oblast, and confirm a continuing trend of people from Sumska and Kharkivska oblasts leaving Ukraine due to the continuous deterioration of the security situation.
- The earlier identified pattern of male minors approaching 18 years old leaving the country accompanied by relatives continues. In October 2024, no unaccompanied children were identified.
- Border monitors also reported the case of a family from Pokrovsk, Donetsk region, trying to leave Ukraine but lacking biometric travel documents. While this was a common issue at the onset of the full-scale invasion, it has not been widely reported later on. The family was allowed to leave Ukraine and enter Poland, with plans to head to onwards.

4. Support provided at the border crossings in October 2024

In October 2024, UNHCR partners, R2P, NEEKA and TTA, conducted **268 monitoring visits to the BCPs** with Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Moldova. During these visits, UNHCR's partners provided different forms of support to **1,400 individuals** who crossed the border. This support included a range of services, including 1,325 instances of protection counselling, 204 instances of legal assistance, while 49 persons received social accompaniment.

Overall, from January to October 2024, UNHCR partners supported almost **14,000 individuals** crossing the borders.

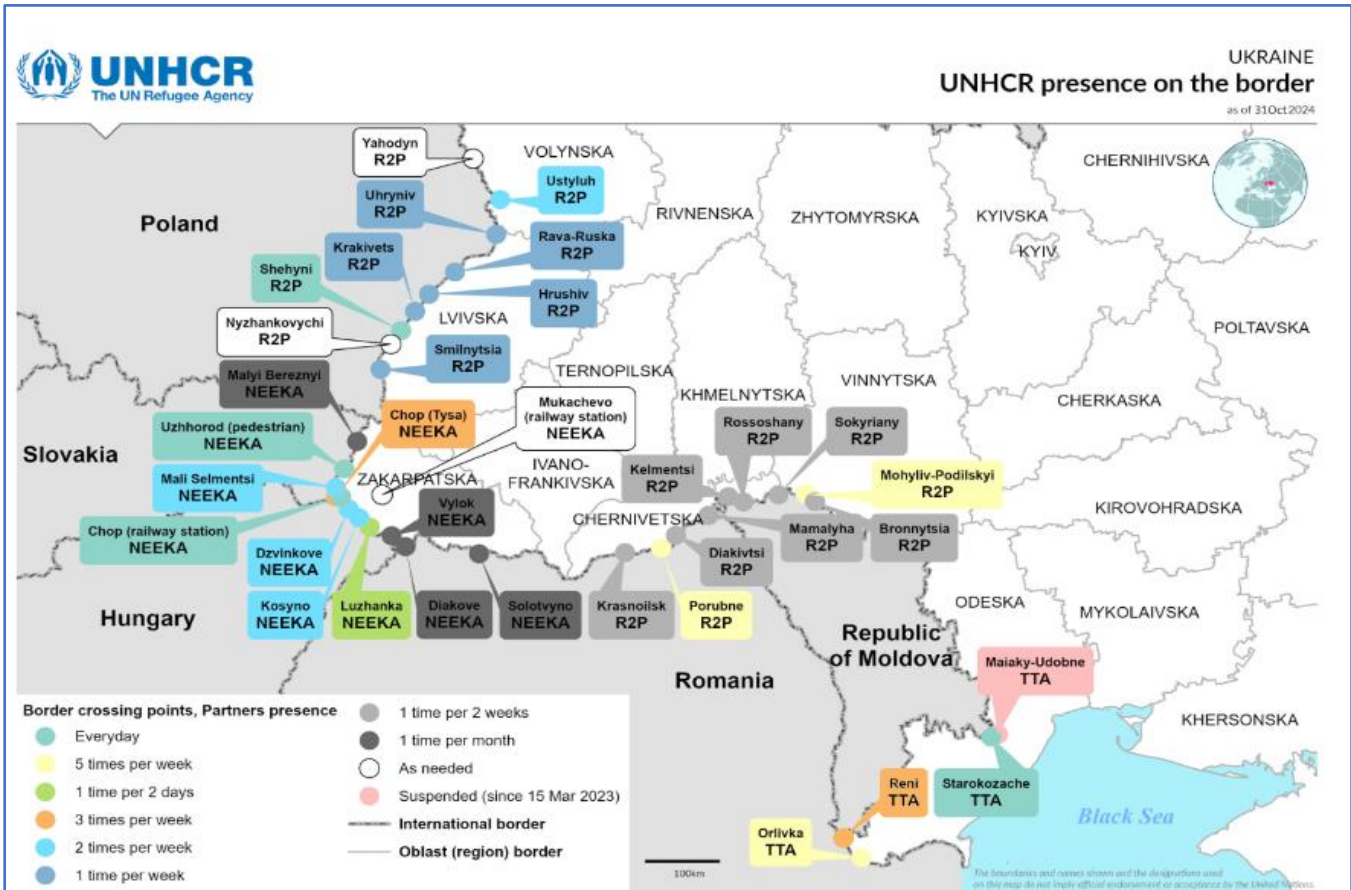
Note on Methodology

From January to October 2024, a total of 28,424 people were surveyed by UNHCR partners at the borders. In October 2024, UNHCR partners surveyed 2,210 people (comprising 69% females 18-59 years of age, 16% males 18-59 years of age, 6% females 60+ years of age, 9% males 60+ years of age and 3% 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 monitors.



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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

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