



Process of crossing the border to Poland at Shehyni BCP by pedestrians, September 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 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 contrast to July and August, September 2024 witnessed a significant drop in cross-border movements, with outbound movement exceeding inbound movements and a net outflow of 45,000 people reported. This trend is largely attributed to the end of the vacation season and the start of the academic year.

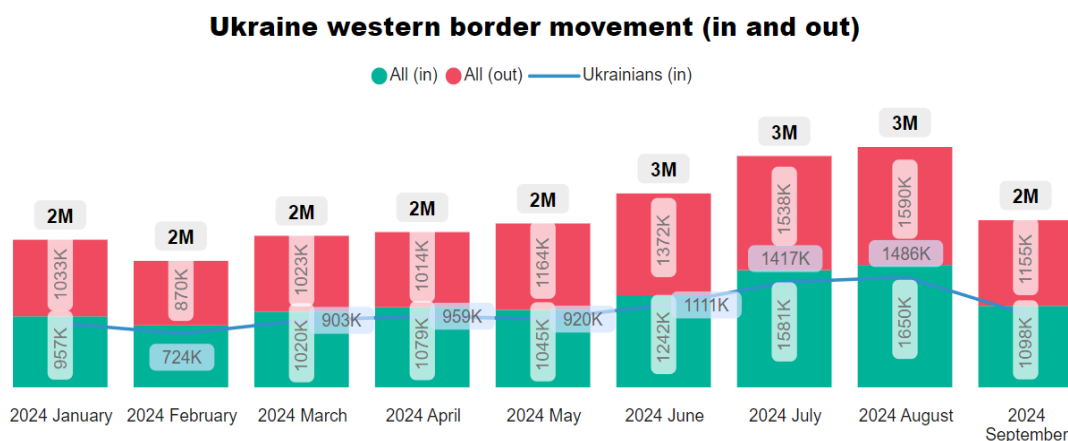


Figure 1: Number of people crossing international borders with Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and Romania. The figure does not include data on border crossings with Moldova. Source: State Border Guard Service (SBGS) of Ukraine.

2. Key monitoring findings

- **First-time departures:** In September 2024, less than a quarter (23%) of surveyed individuals reported leaving Ukraine for the first time since the beginning of the full-scale invasion in February 2022, constituting a slight increase of 2% from August. In 2024, first-time departures peaked in May with 35%.
- **Intended duration of stay abroad:** In September 2024, over half (57%) departed for uncertain periods, while in August, over 71% reported to be leaving for an uncertain period. Those reporting to stay abroad permanently reduced to 6% equal to reports during the first quarter this year.
- **Return intentions:** The share of individuals intending to return steadily decreased from January onwards, with 59% of respondents reporting a return intention in September 2024. This constitutes a 26% decrease since January this year and by 6% from last month. Additionally, the percentage of those unsure about returning increased from 25% in August to 33% in September, and more than doubles the share that were unsure about returning in January.
- **Reasons for departure:** While security and energy-related concerns remain the two most commonly reported reasons for departures, shelter-related concerns have emerged as the third most important reason factored in for departure decisions to 24% in August and September. In contrast, in January this year, only 4% of those departing noted this concern.

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

- **Decrease in irregular border crossings:** The Spokesman of the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine (SBGS) [reported](#) a decline in the number of illegal border crossing attempts by men. In September, the SBGS's official website featured [several reports](#) of minors involved in assisting men in irregular border crossing. These attempts were intercepted.
- **Heightened risks of smuggling:** On September 6, 2024 SBGS informed about [an incident](#) in which border guards intercepted four men attempting to cross the border illegally. Reportedly, after arriving to a destination country the men would have been compelled to work abroad to repay for smuggling services.

SOUNDBITES FROM THE BORDERS

- **Difficulties for men of conscription age to cross the border:** Monitors report continued challenges of men of conscription age to cross borders, often due to different understandings and interpretation of documentation-related requirements.
- **Increase in mothers with children leaving Ukraine:** Border monitors observed a rise in the number of mothers leaving Ukraine with their children for the academic season, often driven by uncertainties due to the war according to interviews.
- **Assistance cuts:** Monitors identified individual cases of returns, attributed to cuts in assistance programs (one case from Poland and another from Ireland).

4. Arrivals from the temporarily occupied territories through Domanove border crossing

Following closure of the Kolotylivka-Pokrovka humanitarian corridor as of 6 August 2024, an increase in arrivals through the international border crossing point (BCP) Domanove in Volyn Oblast located at the border with Belarus has been observed. Before the closure of the humanitarian corridor into Sumska Oblast, on average 5-7 people per week crossed into Volyn Oblast. Following the closure, on average 135 persons are crossing via BCP Domanove per week; 70% of arrivals are women and among them 50% are over 60 years of age.

This BCP is not officially operational but allows returns of Ukrainian citizens from Belarus, the Russian Federation, and temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine. Of note is that entering Belarus requires a Russian passport, and at the BCP, Belarus border service only allow crossing into Ukraine if people have valid identification documents.

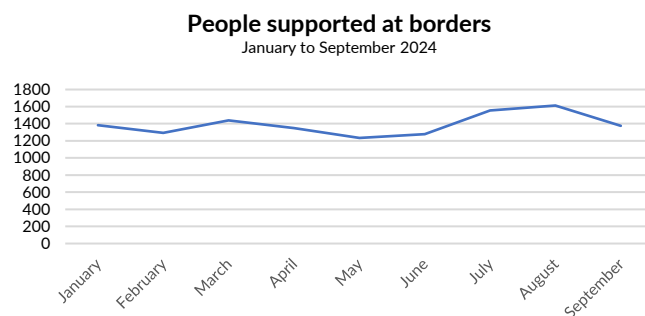
There is a 1.5 to 1.8 km long pedestrian pathway allowing people to cross the border. Border crossing starts at about 3 to 4pm. Humanitarian organizations are not present at the BCP itself and Ukrainian border guards assist individuals with luggage. The BCP is also equipped with four wheelchairs and one walker to assist individuals with limited mobility. Upon arrival on the Ukrainian side, the border security screening takes place. For those needing to wait, there is a waiting area, which includes a designated room for mothers and children. This waiting area is furnished with sofas and has a heating system. After the screening procedure, border guards check documents, allowing individuals to exit the BCP zone and enter the premises of nearby NGOs.

On behalf of the rayon administration, NGO *Pluriton* distributes among returnees certificates confirming their border crossing (based on a list from the SBGS), as well as mobile operator starter packs as needed. NGO *Helping to Leave* offers transportation to Kovel, Volyn oblast, and assists with registering for cash assistance. Since Kovel has a railway station, individuals are assisted to purchase tickets for further travel to other Ukrainian cities. The *World Central Kitchen* provides hot meals to arrivals. Additionally, a representative of the Ombudsperson is present at the BCP on weekdays during working hours.

5. Support provided at the border crossings in September 2024

In September 2024, UNHCR partners, R2P, NEEKA and TTA, conducted **248 monitoring visits to the BCPs** with Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Moldova. During these visits, UNHCR’s partners provided different forms of support to **1,375 individuals** who crossed the border. This support included a range of services, including 1,279 instances of protection counselling and 212 instances of legal assistance, while 56 persons received social accompaniment.

Overall, from January to September 2024, UNHCR partners supported over **12,500 individuals** crossing the borders.



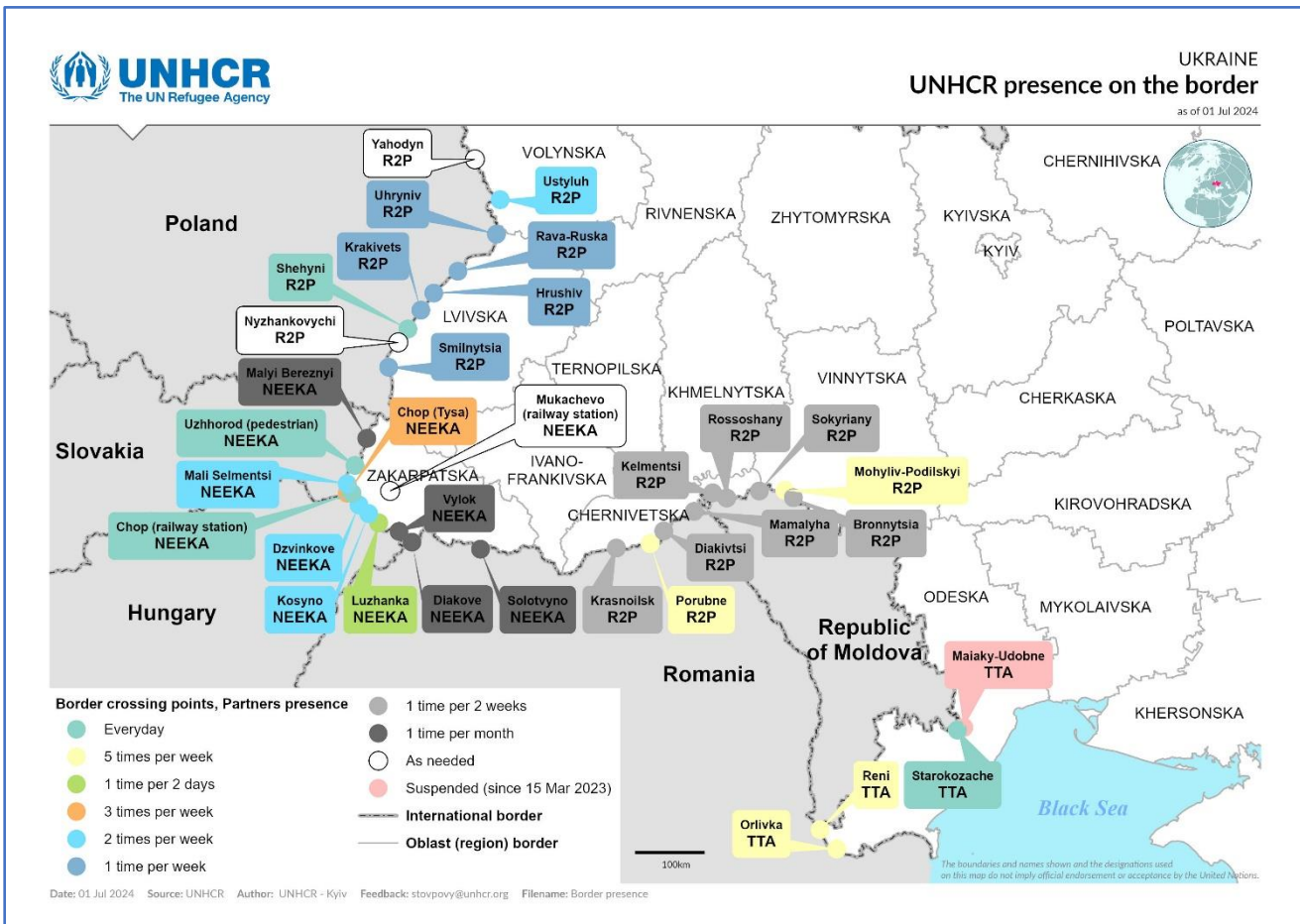
Note on Methodology

From January to September 2024, a total of 26,215 people were surveyed by UNHCR partners at the borders. In September 2024, UNHCR partners surveyed 2,177 people (comprising 67% females 18-59 years of age, 15% males 18-59 years of age, 7% females 60+ years of age, 11% males 60+ years of age and 4% 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 June 2024 [here](#), July 2024 [here](#), August 2024 [here](#).
- Visit Ukraine's Operational Data Portal for more information products [here](#).
- Visit UNHCR Ukraine's Website [here](#).

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