



Figure 1. The line of private cars and trucks to cross the border through BCP Krakivets. Photo credit: 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 protection or to those returning to Ukraine.

1. Movements

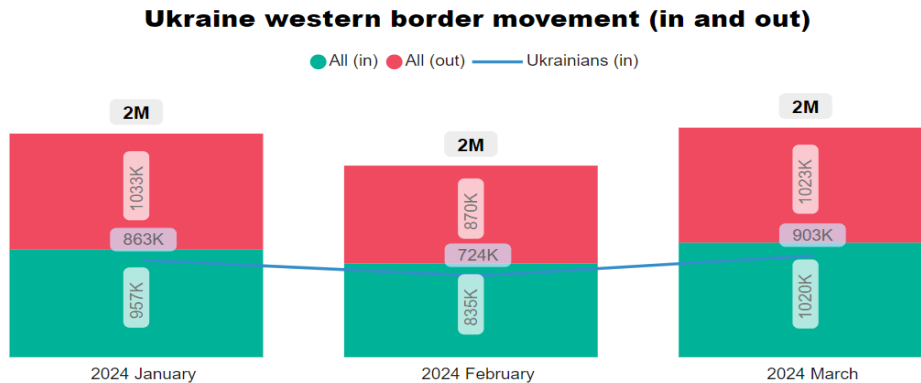


Figure 2. Source: Publicly available State Border Guard Service (SBGS) of Ukraine data regarding the number of people crossing the border with Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, and Romania. Note that this data does not include information on the border with Moldova.

There has been a slight increase in cross-border movements in March 2024, with a net outflow of three thousand individuals. While the number of exits is still higher than the number of entries, the net difference is much smaller than in February (when it reached 35,000).

2. BORDER MONITORING FINDINGS

Information obtained through individual interviews with people leaving Ukraine shows a marked decrease of the share of respondents who cited seeking safety abroad as their reason for leaving Ukraine: from an annual average of 71% in 2022 to an average of 43% in the first quarter of 2024.

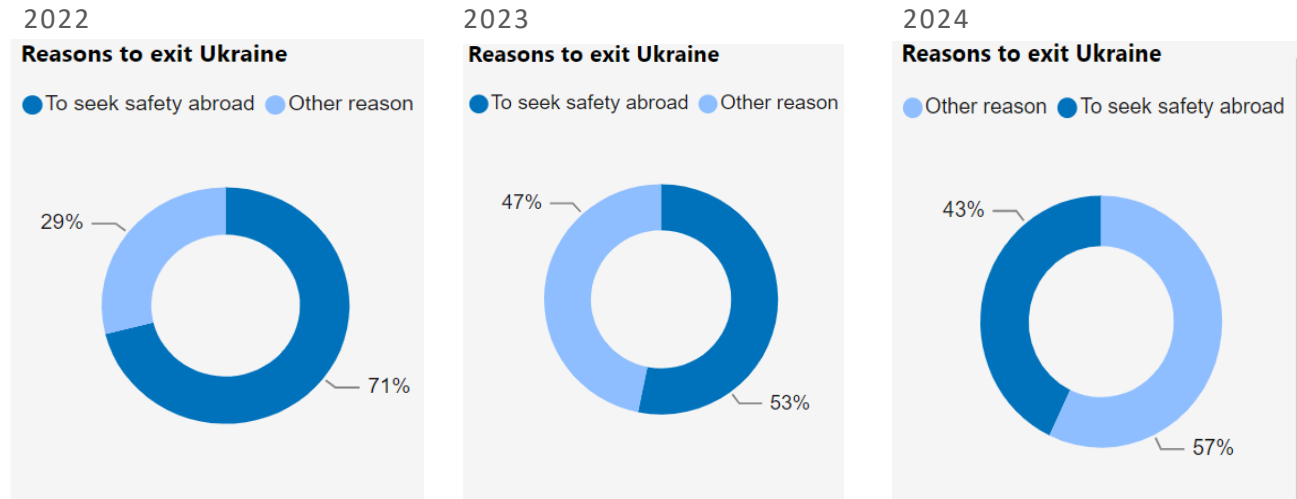


Figure 3. Data based on UNHCR border monitoring for 2022, 2023 and 2024.

Among people returning to Ukraine, the top three destination locations were Odeska oblast (20%), Kyivska oblast (18%) and the city of Kyiv (13%). The top five destination locations for those entering Ukraine have not changed over the last six months.

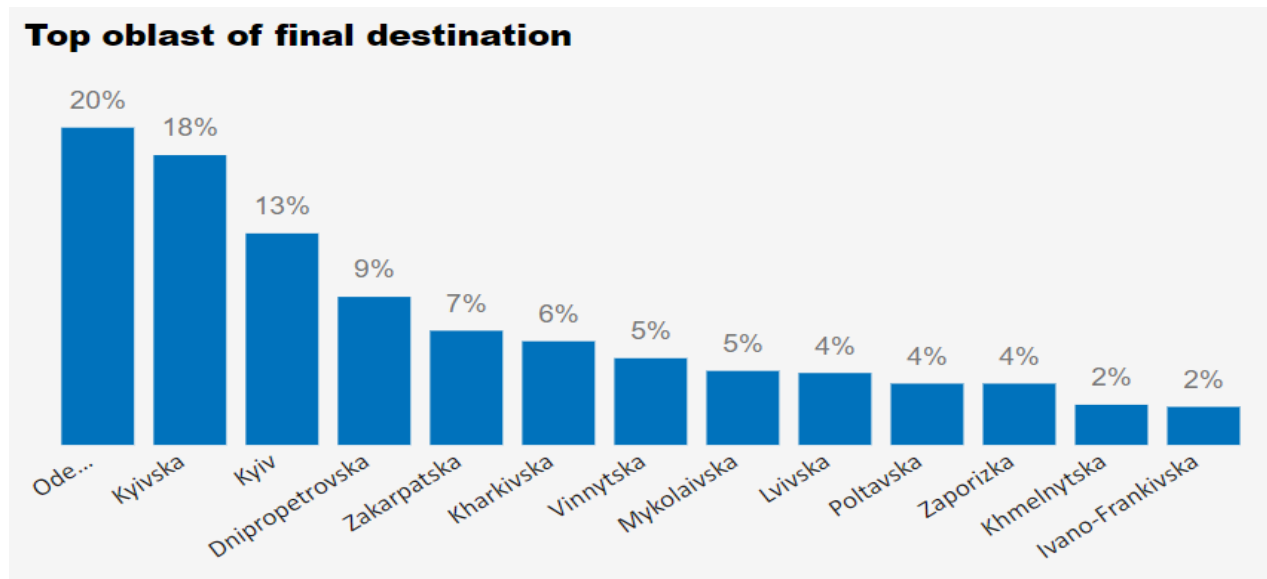
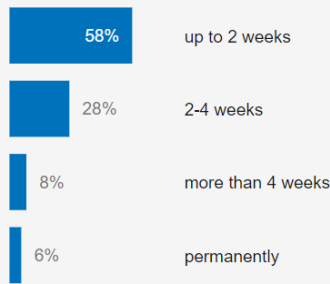


Figure 4. Data based on UNHCR border monitoring.

An analysis of the intentions of those returning to Ukraine demonstrates a significant shift in the intended duration of stay in Ukraine. In the last quarter of 2023, the proportion of people saying that they were coming to Ukraine for a short visit (up to two weeks), mid-term visit (2-4 weeks), longer visit (more than four weeks), or returning permanently were similar. The share of those reporting

Duration of stay in Ukraine


that they were returning on a permanent basis was 19%. In the first quarter of 2024, the proportion of people saying that they were intending to return to Ukraine on a permanent basis dropped to six percent of those interviewed, while the proportion of those returning for a period of less than two weeks doubled (from 29% to 58%). This may be explained by the continued impact of insecurity and rocket and air attacks, as well as changes to legislative provisions relating to conscription and mobilization.

The main reasons for returning to Ukraine (irrespective of the intended duration of stay) remain reuniting with families, taking care of relatives in Ukraine, checking on property, and the lack of access to health care in countries of asylum. The stabilization of the security situation in their area of origin has dropped from the top five reasons for return cited by returning refugees.

Observations obtained during border monitoring:

State Border Guard Service (SBGS) of Ukraine public resources:

- There are continuous reports of men of conscription age attempting to cross the border outside of the official border crossing points, both individually and in groups. Cases are most regularly identified in Odeska and Zakarpatska oblasts.
- The SBGS reported that they had prevented a case of human trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation involving a single mother in a difficult economic situation. The SBGS reported that the suspected trafficker had been arrested and that investigations were ongoing.

On site monitoring:

- Due to legislative changes, presence in the five-kilometer zone along the border is conditional on obtaining a permit from the respective border detachment. These permits are required for all persons residing in the area or conducting economic activity in this zone, but is not required for those who are intending to cross the border for international travel. As a result of these changes, border monitoring partners report installation of new checkpoints in these border areas. Border guards placed in these checkpoints check documents and permits for stay in controlled border areas. Partners report negative consequences for the local population and for IDPs, not all of whom were aware of the need to obtain a permit.
- During the reporting period, border monitors noted an increase in movements from Odeska oblast to Moldova in late March, particularly as night-time attacks on Odeska intensified. Monitors observed that many people said that they were intending to remain in Moldova for a short period of time in order to rest and recuperate given the frequency of night-time attacks and the impact that this was having on their family's well-being and ability to sleep.
- Border monitors continue to observe a high number of mothers with sons aged 16-17 years old leaving Ukraine due to the fear of conscription when their sons turn 18 years of age.
- Border monitors continue to report that men of conscription age are being denied the possibility to leave Ukraine by the border guards due to incomplete documents showing their legal right to exit Ukraine.
- A number of families reported that they were returning to Ukraine because their children were not adjusting to the situation in their country of asylum, including bullying in school.

3. UNHCR ASSISTANCE PROVIDED AT THE BORDER

During the reporting period, UNHCR partners - Right to Protection, NEEKA, and The Tenth of April conducted regular monitoring visits to the BCPs with Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Moldova. Apart from monitoring, partners provided different forms of assistance to 1,441 individuals, including 1,288 instances of protection counseling and 348 instances of legal assistance, while 70 persons received social accompaniment and 5 persons were provided with transportation services.

Note on Methodology

Number of people interviewed in March 2024: 3,216 (comprising 66% females 18-59 years of age, 18% males 18-59 years of age, 7% females 60+ years of age, 9% males 60+ years of age, and 3% persons with disabilities).

In mid-March 2022, UNHCR 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 legal assistance, protection counselling and social support to people leaving Ukraine to seek international protection, or who are returning to the country.

Protection 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's 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.

