



Since mid-March 2022, UNHCR and its local NGO partners Right to Protection, NEEKA, and The Tenth of April, 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 or to those returning to Ukraine.

1. MOVEMENTS



Source: State Border Guard Service (SBGS)

In October 2023, the situation regarding cross-border movement remained stable, characterized by a slight net influx of individuals into Ukraine. There was a net inflow of 17,000 individuals.

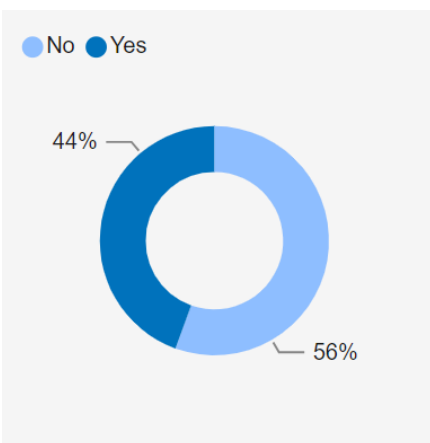
Note: This data is based upon publicly available data from the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine and pertains to the Ukrainian borders with four countries: Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, and Romania, and does not include the data for the border with Moldova.

2. BORDER MONITORING FINDINGS

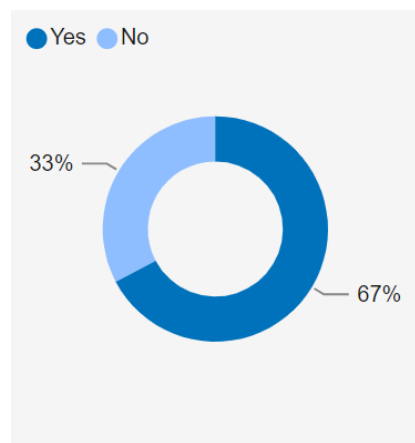
In October 2023, UNHCR Border Monitoring Teams reported that among all individuals interviewed when leaving Ukraine 44% of respondents seeking safety abroad are leaving Ukraine for the first time. This percentage remains consistent with figures reported in August and September of the same year. However, it is significantly lower than the 2022 average, where 67% of interviewees throughout the year indicated it was their first-time leaving Ukraine.

Proportion of respondents first time leaving Ukraine from February 24th, 2023 (October 2023)

October 2023



February – December 2022

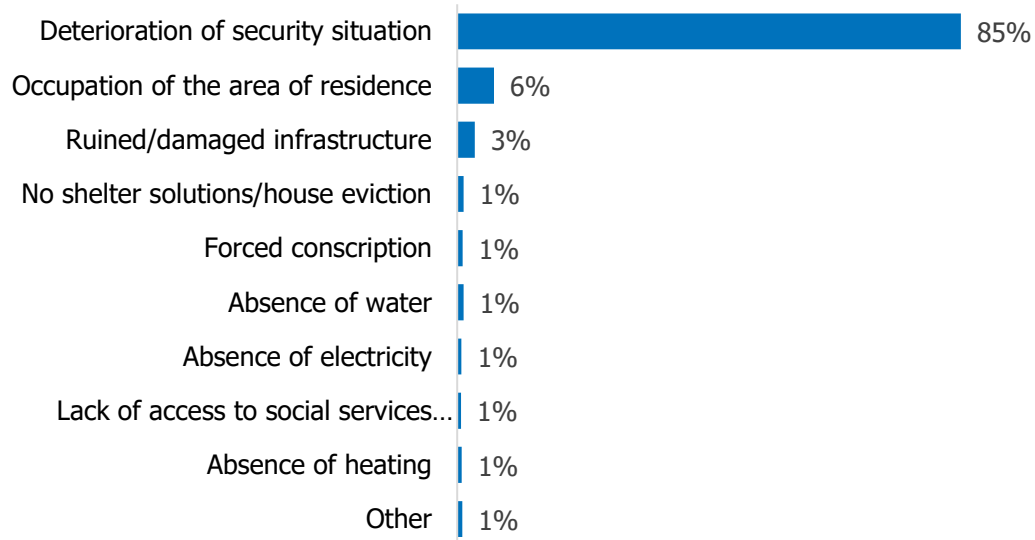


(Both tables above represent responses from people who reported they were leaving or had left Ukraine to seek safety abroad)

During October 2023, respondents seeking safety abroad highlighted the following main reasons to leave Ukraine: deterioration of security situation (85%); occupation of the area of residence (6%); ruined damaged infrastructure (3%); no shelter solution (1%). Some people are deciding to leave because of the potential risk of a blackout, choosing to temporarily stay in other countries (1%).

Comparing the data from January 2023, it was observed that 57% of the respondents cited the worsening security situation as their primary reason for leaving Ukraine. Additionally, 41% of people reported that their main motivation for departure was the lack of essential services, specifically the absence of water, electricity, and heating. This highlights a significant shift in the factors influencing people's decisions to leave.

The main reasons to leave Ukraine (October 2023)

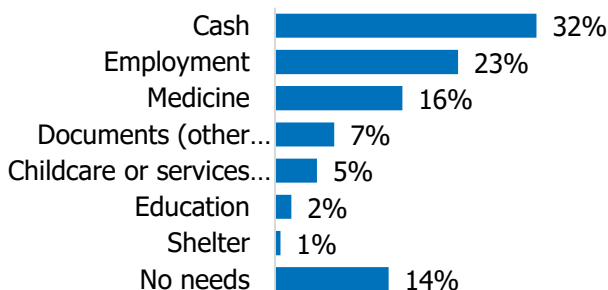


(The graph above represents responses from people who reported they were leaving or had left Ukraine to seek safety abroad)

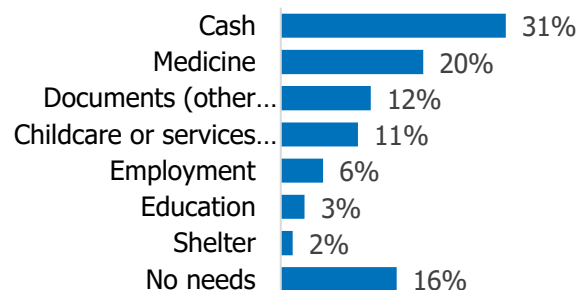
Certain trends have been observed by monitors among individuals leaving the country. A significant segment is leaving to receive treatment for serious medical conditions. While, a notable number of people are returning to Ukraine to access basic medical services, driven by limited healthcare availability in their host countries.

In October 2023, refugees returning to Ukraine identified their primary needs as follows: cash assistance (31%), medicine (20%), documents and other legal aid (12%), childcare or services for the elderly people (11%), employment (6%), education (3%), and shelter (2%). Comparatively, in the period from January to March 2023, cash assistance (32%) and employment (23%) were the most cited priorities among returning refugees.

The main needs upon return (January - March 2023)



The main needs upon return (October 2023)



(The graphs above represent responses from people who reported they were leaving or had left Ukraine to seek safety abroad)

In October, the consultations most frequently provided by border monitors at the border included:

- Understanding the general procedure for border crossing
- Information about services available in asylum countries
- Access to cash assistance when returning to Ukraine
- Guidance on obtaining temporary protection in European Union (EU) countries
- Rules and necessary documents for minors under 18 years traveling alone
- Transportation services within neighboring countries right after border crossing
- Information about traveling with children, focusing on required documentation
- Assistance with restoring documents while abroad

The presence of Third Country Nationals at the border is comparatively less frequent. For those who do appear, consultations are provided, especially concerning the need to obtain visas and other related procedures.

3. LEGAL DEVELOPMENTS

The Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine amended Resolution #920 on October 10, 2023, to reopen the "Kuchurgan" border crossing point in Odesa oblast, previously closed since Russia's invasion, as per the update to the earlier Resolution #188.

On October 6, 2023, the Cabinet of Ministers authorized the State Agency for Infrastructure Reconstruction and Development to use UAH 2 billion for improving, building, and maintaining Ukraine's border checkpoints.

4. UNHCR ASSISTANCE PROVIDED AT THE BORDER

A total of 1,114 individuals who crossed the border in October 2023 received support from UNHCR partners conducting the border monitoring. The assistance provided included legal aid, protection counseling and social assistance.

During the month of October 2023, UNHCR partners - Right to Protection, NEEKA, and The Tenth of April - conducted 308 monitoring visits to the border crossing points with Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Moldova. During these visits, a range of services was provided to persons crossing the border, including 955 instances of protection counseling, 238 instances of legal assistance, 96 persons received social accompaniment.

In October 2023, UNHCR and IOM conducted two last training sessions for the State Border Guard Service targeting 37 border guards in Vinnytsia. The trainings focused on combatting human trafficking risks and enhancing the ability of border guards to identify and support unaccompanied and separated children at the border and were a continuation of the series of nine joint training sessions initiated from August this year, where up to 150 border guards received training in Uzhhorod, Mukachevo, Lviv, Lutsk, Odesa, Izmail and Vinnytsia.

Note on Methodology

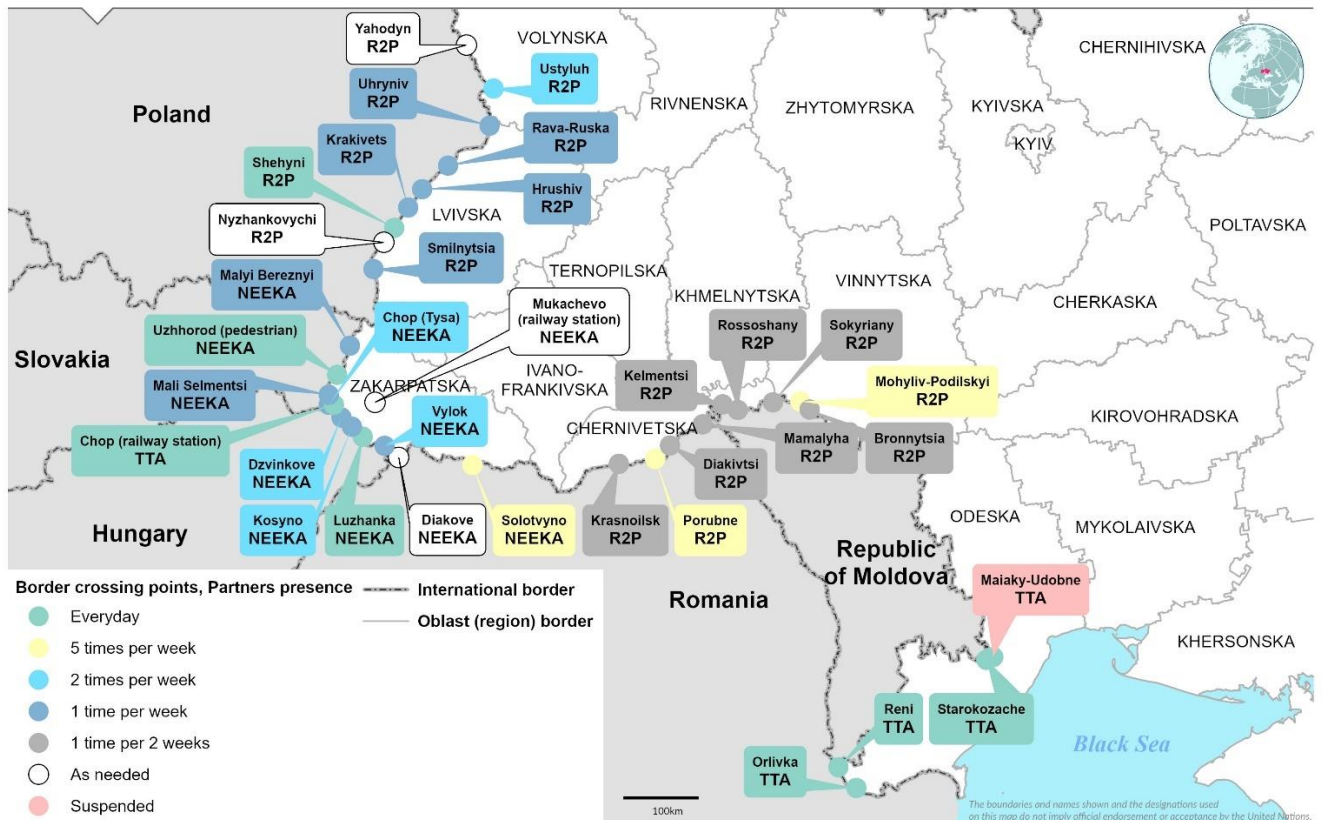
Number of people interviewed in September 2023: 3,190 (comprising 63% females 18-59 years of age, 21% males 18-59 years of age, 6% females 60+ years of age, 10% males 60+ years of age, and 1% persons with disabilities).

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.

as of 13 Nov 2023



Date: 13 Nov 2023 Source: UNHCR Author: UNHCR - Kyiv Feedback: stovpovy@unhcr.org Filename: Border presence