

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



Pedestrians crossing the border at Shehyni BCP, July 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)

In June and July 2024, patterns in cross-border movements aligned with those observed in 2023. While in June of both years, a greater net outflow of some 130 K was observed, in July, net inflows were monitored in 2023 (69K) and 2024 (43K). This pattern is likely associated with summer holiday season mobility. July 2024 saw the highest overall cross-border activity of the year, with more than 3 million people crossing the border with Ukraine in both directions. This inbound movement is likely attributed to returns of citizens from holidays, as well as short-term visits by temporary protection (TP) holders to check on their property or visit families in Ukraine.

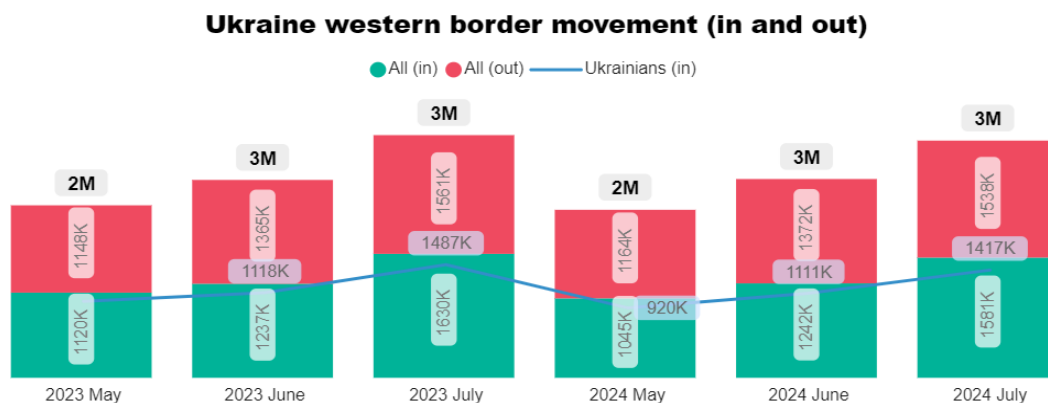


Figure 1: Number of people crossing international borders with Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and Romania. The figure does not include data on border crossings with Moldova. Source: State Border Guard Service (SBGS) of Ukraine.

2. Key monitoring findings

General observations

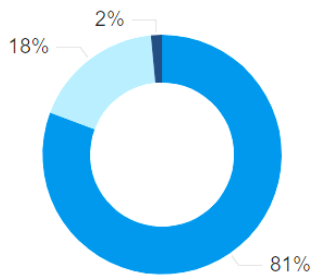
Intentions to return

July 2024 marks a significant shift in the intentions of surveyed individuals regarding their return to Ukraine compared to earlier months of 2024. Although the majority (67%) still affirm their intention to return to Ukraine one day, it is the first month this share has fallen as low. UNHCR border monitoring teams continue to observe a notable rise in individuals uncertain about returning to Ukraine, with the share doubling from 14% in January to 28% in July 2024.

January – June 2024

Intend to return to Ukraine if the situation stabilises

● Yes ● Not sure ● No



July 2024

Intend to return to Ukraine if the situation stabilises

● Yes ● Not sure ● No

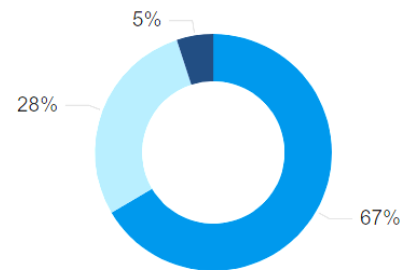


Figure 2: Data based on UNHCR border monitoring 2024.

Main factors influencing returns

As of July 2024, UNHCR has added key factors influencing return decisions to the border monitoring questionnaire. 55% of surveyed individuals named improvement of the security situation as the primary factor, followed by 26% of respondents referencing the stabilization of the energy situation, and 12% access to livelihoods and employment in Ukraine. Of note is that only 3% of respondents connected return with possible cut, closure or suspension of assistance programs in hosting countries. This small share is likely related to the fact that this question is asked at the point of exit of Ukraine.

Main factors influencing return decisions

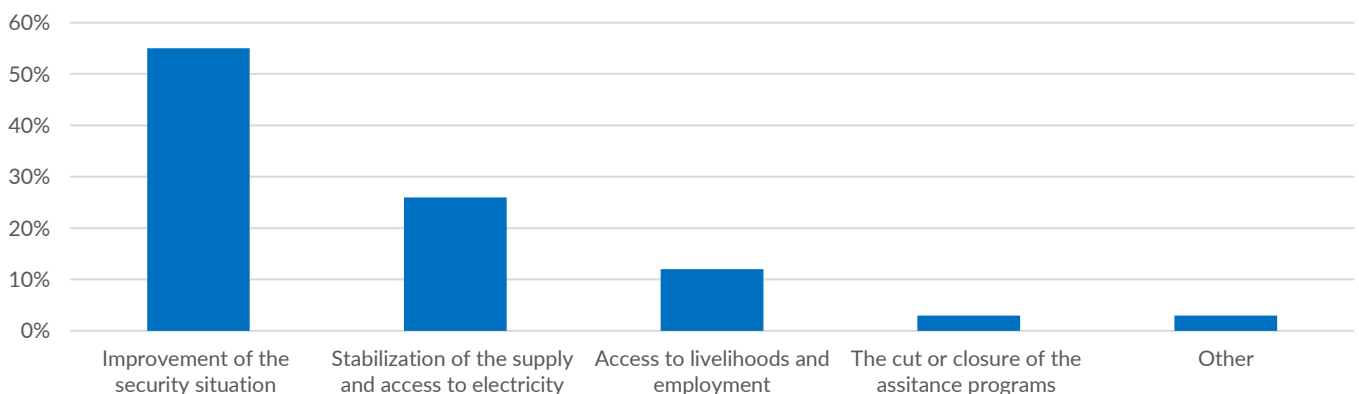


Figure 3: Data based on UNHCR border monitoring, July 2024.

Lack of the energy as a reason to leave the country. Monitors report a continued growing trend in departures attributed to energy-related challenges. In June 2024, when the attacks against energy infrastructure resulted in significant electricity supply cuts, 25% of respondents cited energy problems as push factors. In July 2024, this figure nearly doubled (49%). While, according to border monitors, respondents noted the temporary of their departure, July 2024 saw the highest rate thus far of uncertainty about the duration of stay abroad at 58%, notably due to the overall uncertainty about the situation in Ukraine.

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

- On [23rd](#) and [25th](#) of July 2024, the SBGS reported five cases involving fake marriages between men of conscription age and women with disabilities. During interviews, the border guards revealed that financial benefits were promised to women after the successful crossing. In all cases border crossing was denied. This highlights that a trend in marriages involving women with disabilities and the increased risk of exploitation for these women.
- The trend in smuggling of men is growing. There are weekly reports of interception of men of conscription age intending to cross the border in an irregular manner. Authorities continue to identify organizers of such type of crossings and initiate investigations.
- Two cases of attempts to leave Ukraine irregularly by third country nationals were reported: [Republic of India](#) and [Sri Lanka](#). In both cases, individuals were attempting to travel to EU countries after overstaying in Ukraine on visa or with an expired residence permit.

SOUNDBITES FROM THE BORDERS

- Border monitors observed a rising number of first-time departures, particularly from Kharkivska, Chernihivska, Mykolaivska, Odeska, and Kyivska oblasts. Security concerns are cited as the primary reason for these departures. For some of them, the attacks in early July were tipping points.
- Border monitors observed an increase in the number of mothers with 17 years old boys leaving Ukraine reportedly for educational purposes. Notably, some families do not know the country of future studies.
- Border monitors noted an increase in buses with children heading for 'rest and recuperation', such as sports teams and camp groups. This has become a common and recurring trend for the summer period.
- Border monitors reported that in July Romania has introduced new rules regarding crossing the border in vehicles. These rules require that any car repeatedly entering Romania within a year to have a confirmation of technical maintenance according to European standards. The cost of such a procedure and confirmation in Ukraine is up to EUR 50. This rule caused a lot of denials to cross the border from Romanian border guards during the reporting period.

3. Support provided at the border crossings in June 2024

In July 2024, UNHCR partners, R2P, NEEKA and TTA, conducted **265 monitoring visits to the BCPs** with Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Moldova. During these visits, UNHCR's partners provided different forms of support to **1,556 individuals** who crossed the border. This support included a range of services, including 1,500 instances of protection counselling and 148 instances of legal assistance, while 38 persons received social accompaniment and 1 individual received transportation services. Partners reported 3 cases of unaccompanied and separated children during reporting period.

Overall, from January to July 2024, UNHCR partners supported **9,541 individuals** crossing the borders.

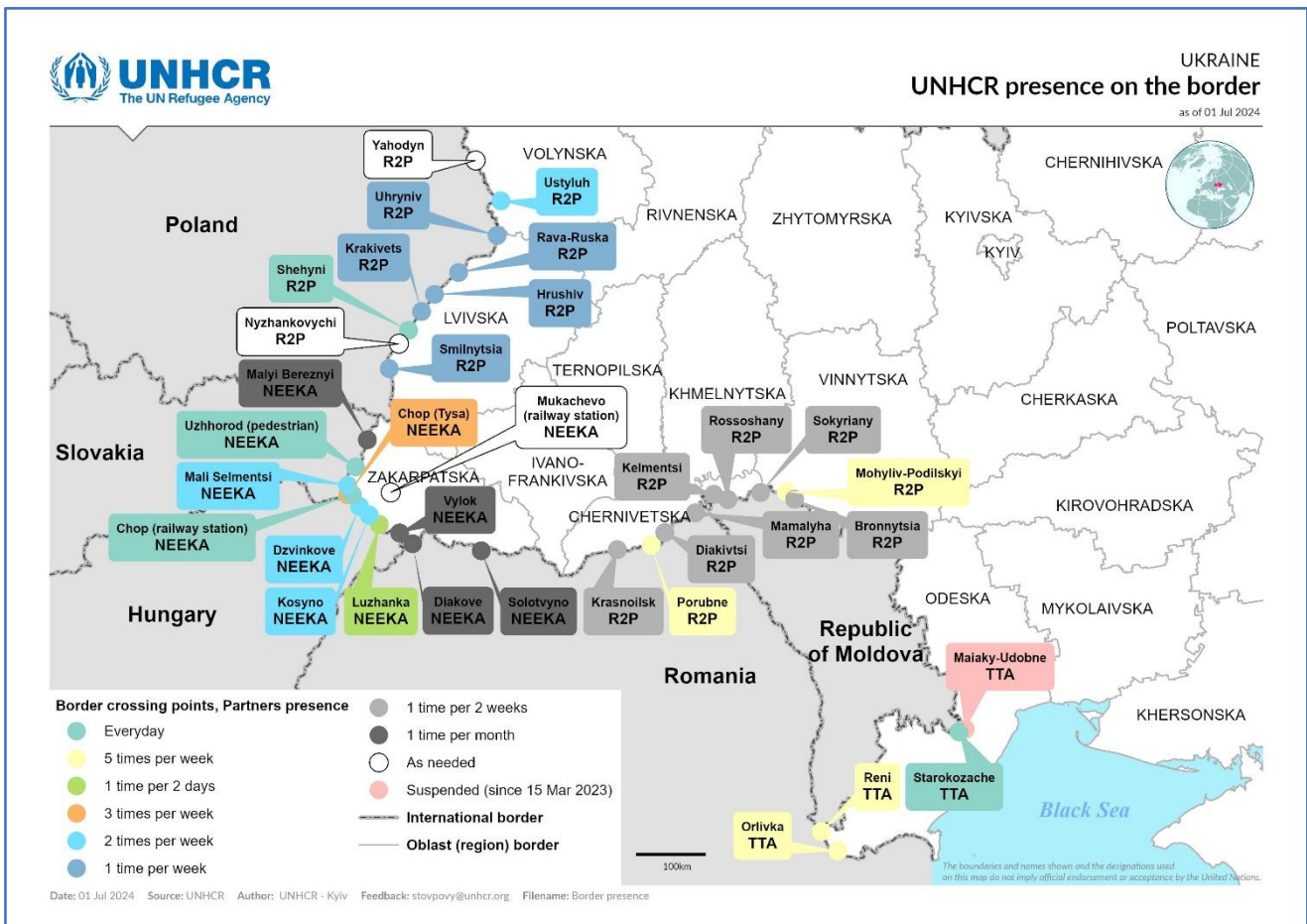
Note on Methodology

From January to July 2024, a total of 21,824 people were surveyed by UNHCR partners at the borders. In July 2024, UNHCR partners surveyed 2,478 people (comprising 79% females 18-59 years of age, 7% males 18-59 years of age, 11% females 60+ years of age, 3% and 2% 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 April 2024 [here](#), May 2024 [here](#), June 2024 [here](#).
- Visit Ukraine's Operational Data Portal for more information products [here](#).
- Visit UNHCR Ukraine's Website [here](#).

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