



Refugees fleeing war in Ukraine board a bus as they arrive at Palanca, Moldova. AP Photo/Aurel Obreja. 2 March 2022

Rapid Gender Analysis Brief Ukrainian Refugees in Moldova

Introduction

Since the escalation of the war in Ukraine on 24 February 2022, Moldova has been one of the countries in the region hosting people from Ukraine. Communities, as well as local, national and international non-governmental organisations (INGOs), have mobilised to support the refugees with basic needs and services. To date – 28 June – a total of 8,402,336 border crossings from Ukraine have been recorded, with 5,493,437 individual refugees from Ukraine recorded across Europe.¹

As of 4 July, 521,549 individuals from Ukraine have arrived in Moldova; 334,903 or 64 per cent are female, of which 25 per cent are girls; and 186,646 or 36 per cent are male, of which 46 per cent are boys². The majority (92 per cent) of those arriving are Ukrainian and 8 per cent are third country nationals (TCNs).³ No verifiable disability-disaggregated data has been identified and a Rapid Gender Analysis (RGA) by Action Aid on 27 April reported that there is no data on Roma populations or the registration of transgender people.⁴

Current figures show that, while the majority of people arriving in Moldova move onwards, around one third stay in the country. Most require immediate assistance having arrived with limited resources.⁵ As of 4 July, 83,832, or less

¹ UNHCR. Operational Data Portal. Ukraine Refugee Situation - <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine> - accessed 4 July

² UNHCR. Operational Data Portal. Ukraine Refugee Situation – Republic of Moldova
<https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine/location/10784> - accessed 4 July

³ Ibid.

⁴ Action Aid. Atria Mier and Jara Henar. Rapid Gender Analysis. Moldova – Ukraine Crisis. 27 April 2022.

<https://reliefweb.int/report/moldova/ukraine-situation-moldova-actionaid-rapid-gender-analysis-27-april>

⁵ WFP. Moldova. Factsheet. Updated as of 10 May 2022. <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/92728>

than one in five refugees have remained in Moldova.⁶ Moldova is one of the poorest countries in Europe with a population of only 2.6 million, making it the country with the most Ukrainian refugees per-capita.⁷

Methodology

This RGA brief was developed through a review of existing secondary data (pre-crisis and since 24 February 2022). RGAs are progressive and, therefore, as the crisis continues, it will be necessary to update this RGA Brief. As a first iteration, this RGA Brief aims to bring together existing data, analysis and assessments to inform an understanding of the gender and intersectional dynamics of the emergency and the response; and to identify the gaps in current analysis with a view to collecting primary data in the next iteration of the RGA. This will be important to ensure the specific impacts of the crisis as well as the distinct needs, priorities and concerns of women, men, boys, girls from different at-risk groups are understood and adequately integrated within the response.

This RGA brief highlights the most significant gender and protection issues for refugees from Ukraine in Moldova under three pre-identified areas of enquiry: access to information; access to services; and safety and protection. It concludes with key recommendations.

Key Findings

Access to information

There are a number of channels established to support and assist refugees in Moldova. These include the 'Green Line', which was launched by UNHCR in March 2020 as a dedicated helpline for refugees. The helpline team assists refugees including by offering information about organisations that provide advice and support.⁸ SIM cards are being distributed and internet access provided free of charge to refugees.

An April 2022 assessment by UN Women, IOM and Women Count showed that 36.5 per cent of women lacked knowledge about health services, 56.9 per cent about psychological support, 55.7 per cent about legal or documentation support and 54 per cent about harassment or GBV.⁹ The data reported were specific to the experiences of women only. For future analysis, it would be important to understand the differences between women and men's access to information, as well as how accessible information is for different groups of women and men.

Reporting in the Moldova Refugee Response Interagency Update (9-12 April 2022) the Disability Taskforce¹⁰ identified issues for persons with disabilities, which included limited accessible infrastructure, information about services and assistive technologies.¹¹ A report by Action Aid (dated 27 April) highlighted that the Roma population, in particular, experience a lack of accurate (if any) information on asylum processes across European countries, as well as the services provided.¹²

In efforts to increase social cohesion, the Inclusion and Livelihoods Working Group reported on a cultural activity that took place in Boscana, between residents and Ukrainian refugees. This initiative provided a specific space for women from both communities to meet and share information, concerns and contacts with one another.¹³

⁶ UNHCR. Operational Data Portal. Ukraine Refugee Situation – Republic of Moldova
<https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine/location/10784> - accessed 4 July.

⁷ Help Age International. Moldova: Rapid needs assessment of older refugees. 10 March 2022.
<https://www.alnap.org/system/files/content/resource/files/main/Rapid%20Needs%20of%20Older%20Refugees%20in%20Moldova%20-%2010-03-22%20-%203-Pager.pdf>

⁸ UNHCR. Moldova refugee inter-agency coordination. Moldova refugee response. Interagency update #8. 9-12 April 2022.
<https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/92076>

⁹ UN Women, IOM, Women Count. Updated displacement survey: Ukrainian refugees and Third Country Nationals. Displacement patterns, needs and intentions survey. 9-27 March 2022. https://moldova.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-04/IOM_MDA_Updated_Displacement_Survey.pdf

¹⁰ Chaired by Keystone Moldova with the support of the UN Human Rights Office (OHCHR)

¹¹ UNHCR. Moldova refugee inter-agency coordination. Moldova refugee response. Interagency update #8. 9-12 April 2022.
<https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/92076>

¹² Action Aid. Atria Mier and Jara Henar. Rapid Gender Analysis. Moldova – Ukraine crisis. 27 April 2022.
<https://reliefweb.int/report/moldova/ukraine-situation-moldova-actionaid-rapid-gender-analysis-27-april>

¹³ Government of Moldova and UNDP. Moldova Refugee Response: Inclusion and Livelihoods Working Group. Inclusion and Livelihoods. Issue Brief #3. 11 May 2022. <https://reliefweb.int/report/moldova/moldova-refugee-response-inclusion-and-livelihoods-working-group-co-chaired-state-0>

Access to services

With the influx of people from Ukraine representing close to 4 per cent of the whole Moldova population, local resources are being stretched and this has significant budgetary implications for the Moldovan authorities and service providers.¹⁴ From the start of the crisis, officials in the country have emphasised the need to avoid the creation of parallel systems of support in the response.

Employment

According to a joint assessment¹⁵, two thirds of women refugees were employed in Ukraine and 36 per cent expressed their willingness to find a job in Moldova, while another 3 per cent of women are already working in Moldova.¹⁶ Women's preferred economic sectors include: trade (18 per cent), personal care (12 per cent), health (10 per cent), education (5 per cent), restaurants and hotels (6 per cent) and agriculture (4 per cent).

Strong patriarchal attitudes exist in Moldova, which create barriers and limit Moldovan women and girls' education and employment options.¹⁷ This may have the impact of placing traditional expectations and restrictions on Ukrainian and TCN women refugees regarding unpaid care work and their ability to earn an income.¹⁸

In addition, the Roma community in Moldova faces difficulties in accessing civil status documentation, which can impact their access to education and employment. This is especially true for Roma women and girls who already face barriers within their own community and within Ukraine due to strong gender roles and expectations and discrimination respectively.¹⁹ Further information is required to understand the distinct barriers to employment for women and men, as well as specific groups such as the Roma populations, persons with disabilities and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and asexual (LGBTQIA+) individuals.

Cash Assistance

UNHCR began its cash assistance programme on 25 March 2022. As of 11 April, 18,000 individuals had received cash assistance, of which 88 per cent are women and children and 12 per cent are persons over 60 years of age. The eligibility criteria for cash assistance, include: (1) households with one or more dependents; (2) households headed by a single parent; (3) households headed by a child (below 18); (4) households with an unaccompanied or separated child; (5) households headed by an older person (above 60); and (6) household with one or more persons with specific needs, including person with a disability, pregnant woman, person with a serious medical condition, woman at risk, person with legal and physical protection needs and LGBTQI.²⁰

To mitigate risks, UNHCR has established protection desks at cash enrolment centres. The protection desk assists with counselling, identifying vulnerable individuals, and making referrals²¹, as well as awareness raising through leaflets focused on safe migration, the risks of trafficking in persons, and how to claim asylum in Moldova.²²

Cash assistance (in the form of a one-off payment) is also available to households who are currently hosting at least two refugees from Ukraine for a minimum period of one week. An interagency update covering the period of 9-12 April 2022 reported that WFP has established a hotline to address queries and feedback on the cash assistance to host communities and since 8 April 2022 had received over 350 calls. Callers are predominantly women (75 per cent), middle-aged and living in Chisinau.²³

Accommodation

¹⁴ WFP. Moldova. Factsheet. Updated as of 10 May 2022. <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/92728>

¹⁵ UN Women, IOM, Women Count. Updated displacement survey: Ukrainian refugees and Third Country Nationals. Displacement patterns, needs and intentions survey. 9-27 March 2022. https://moldova.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-04/IOM_MDA_Updated_Displacement_Survey.pdf

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ UN Women Moldova. Gender equality in Moldova. No Date. <https://moldova.unwomen.org/en/munca-noastra/gender-equality-in-moldova>

¹⁸ UN Women. Action Brief. A brief analysis on the gendered impacts of the crisis in Ukraine: A focus on Moldova. May 2022. No link available.

¹⁹ Ibid. and ERRC, 8 March 2022, 'Ukrainian Roma in Moldova face segregation, poor conditions and – without documentation – [have] nowhere to go' <http://www.errc.org/news/ukrainian-roma-face-segregation-poor-conditions-and---without-documentation---nowhere-to-go>

²⁰ UNHCR. UNHCR Moldova. Cash assistance for refugees. 15 April 2022. <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/92067>

²¹ UNHCR. Moldova refugee inter-agency coordination. Moldova refugee response. Interagency update #8. 9-12 April 2022.

<https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/92076>

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

While some refugees are staying in government-managed reception centres, over 90 per cent are residing outside of Refugee Accommodation Centres (RACs), including in host communities.²⁴

At the time of writing, 90 RACs have been established across the country.²⁵ In an assessment by REACH of 87 RACs, it was estimated that those hosted in RACs included 69 per cent females and 31 per cent males (including children). Older persons (65+) comprised 9 per cent, infants aged 0 to 2 years an estimated 5 per cent and children aged 2-8 years old 37 per cent of those hosted in the RACs.

Of the assessed RACs, 25 per cent had pregnant and lactating women, 29 per cent had persons with disabilities and 1 per cent had persons with serious medical conditions.²⁶ The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection has allocated 10 per cent of places in two shelters for persons with physical disabilities.²⁷ The Centre for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CDPD), evaluated the accessibility of the centres and is fundraising to improve the physical accessibility of centres.²⁸

In a survey conducted by UN Women, IOM and Women Count in March 2022, women refugees hosted in centres generally reported the conditions there as adequate. Only 6 per cent reported limited access to bath facilities and 4 per cent insufficient space for bedding with privacy.²⁹ Women and adolescent girls report the need for non-food items (NFIs) and dignity/hygiene kits that are gender- and age-sensitive. The report noted that refugees staying in RACs were more likely to receive hygiene kits than those staying in private accommodation.³⁰ Noting the majority of people are staying outside of RACs, it is important to ensure all women and girls have regular access to menstrual hygiene materials.

One quarter of women with children reported the lack of safe and private spaces for breastfeeding and 44 per cent were not aware of such areas in the centre where they lived.³¹ Comparing this with the number of RACs that were noted to have pregnant and lactating women staying, it is essential that provisions for breastfeeding mothers and children are available and that information about such facilities is made accessible to women.

Education

According to a joint assessment³², 83 per cent of women were travelling with at least one child below the age of 18, 44 per cent of women are travelling with one child and 34 per cent with two. Women reported the need for child-care services and/or school enrolment support.³³ In the Chisinau centre, the municipality is supporting the enrolment of children in the Moldovan school system.³⁴

Safety and protection

With women and children making up the vast majority of refugees, their protection is of utmost concern. A significant proportion of refugees arriving to Moldova are women heading households, single women, adolescent girls and older women. These groups are considered to be at heightened risk of gender-based violence (GBV).³⁵

In April 2022, UNHCR made a statement calling the Ukrainian refugee crisis a protection crisis. Two months later, on 6 June at the UN Security Council, Pramila Patten, the United Nations Special Representative on Sexual Violence, called the humanitarian crisis a trafficking crisis. Risks of GBV, trafficking, abuse and psychological

²⁴ WFP. Moldova. Factsheet. Updated as of 10 May 2022. <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/92728>

²⁵ REACH. Refugee Accommodation Centre (RAC) Weekly Needs Monitoring. Moldova. Update as of 11.05.2022.

<https://reliefweb.int/report/moldova/moldova-refugee-accommodation-centre-rac-weekly-needs-monitoring-update-11052022-enro>

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ This was as a result of advocacy from OHCHR, Keystone Moldova, The Centre for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CDPD) and the Alliance of Organisation of Persons with Disabilities.

²⁸ UNHCR. Moldova refugee inter-agency coordination. Moldova refugee response. Interagency update #8. 9-12 April 2022.

<https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/92076>

²⁹ UN Women, IOM, Women Count. Updated displacement survey: Ukrainian refugees and Third Country Nationals. Displacement patterns, needs and intentions survey. 9-27 March 2022. https://moldova.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-04/IOM_MDA_Updated_Displacement_Survey.pdf

³⁰ UN Women. Action Brief. A brief analysis on the gendered impacts of the crisis in Ukraine: A focus on Moldova. May 2022. No link available.

³¹ UN Women, IOM, Women Count. Updated displacement survey: Ukrainian refugees and Third Country Nationals. Displacement patterns, needs and intentions survey. 9-27 March 2022. https://moldova.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-04/IOM_MDA_Updated_Displacement_Survey.pdf

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Plan International. Ukraine Response. Rapid Needs Assessment Report Joint report for Moldova, Poland and Romania. March 2022. Link not available.

³⁵ UNHCR. Regional Refugee Response Plan for the Ukraine Situation. Moldova: Gender-based Violence Sub-Working Group. Update #2. May 2022. <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/92782>

trauma increase in times of conflict and displacement.³⁶ Given the distinct gendered impacts of the conflict in Ukraine and associated displacement, it is important to assess and mitigate against the impacts of these protection risks on women, girls, boys and men from diverse backgrounds.

Gender-based violence (GBV) and sexual and reproductive health (SRH)

According to a 2019 study, by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), 75 per cent of women in Ukraine said that they had experienced violence since age 15, of whom one in three had experienced physical or sexual violence.³⁷ Older women are also at risk of violence. Research by HelpAge International on conflict-affected older women and men in Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts in Ukraine, found that 21 per cent of older people (76 per cent of whom were women) were experiencing at least one type of violence and abuse.³⁸ Since the escalation of the war, an increase in domestic violence has been noted, with reports of conflict-related sexual violence. At the same time, access to response services has been restricted due to the crisis.³⁹ Therefore, there will be women and children arriving in Moldova requiring immediate access to GBV support services. In addition, once arrived, the risk of GBV is also high in informal shelter, reception and transit facilities, government-run and private sector refugee accommodation centres/facilities, as well as in transportation from the border to transit facilities and onward to other countries.⁴⁰

This risk of GBV is taking place in a context of already high incidences of such violence in Moldova. It is estimated that 63 per cent of Moldovan women have experienced partner violence, including psychological, physical or sexual violence, over their lifetime. Rates were higher for rural women, separated or divorced women and women who are employed or have their own income, compared to women who were housewives.⁴¹

An interagency referral pathways package has been finalised by the Referral Pathways Task Force in Moldova under the Protection Working Group, the GBV and the Child Protection Sub-Working Groups.⁴² The aim is to increase access for survivors to lifesaving multi-sectoral response services, including health, legal, psychosocial support, safe shelter, and core assistance such as cash assistance, air transfers within the European Union, transport assistance, etc.⁴³ GBV pathways include specific contacts for LGBTQI+ survivors and survivors with disabilities. It was not clear if there are services specific for male survivors or if there were provisions to support male survivors in the broader GBV pathways listed.

The March 2022 survey by UN Women, IOM and Women Count found that of the respondents, 50 per cent of women did not know where to seek help in case of experiencing harassment or GBV.⁴⁴ With the development and roll-out of the GBV referral pathways, it will be important to monitor and enhance women's awareness and use of these.

As of 19 April 2022, all refugees from Ukraine in Moldova have been able to avail of SRH care services free of charge, similar to the Moldovan population. According to UNFPA, the list of SRH services provided for free includes: antenatal and postnatal care, skilled delivery care, including through caesarean section, gynaecological investigations, pap-test for cervical cancer prevention, family planning, treatment of sexually transmitted infections, and other essential services.⁴⁵ Abortion is legal in Moldova within the first 12 weeks of pregnancy. To respond to

³⁶ UNHCR. Statement on risks of trafficking and exploitation facing refugees from Ukraine attributed to UNHCR's Assistant High Commissioner for Protection. 12 April 2022. <https://www.unhcr.org/news/press/2022/4/6255a6964/statement-risks-trafficking-exploitation-facing-refugees-ukraine-attributed.html>

³⁷ OSCE (2019). Wellbeing and safety of Women cited in CARE and UN Women. Rapid Gender Analysis of Ukraine: Secondary Data Review 29 March 2022. https://careevaluations.org/wp-content/uploads/CARE-and-UN-Women-Ukraine-Rapid-Gender-Analysis_April-2022.pdf

³⁸ HelpAge International (2018) Missing Millions: How older people with disabilities are excluded from humanitarian response cited in CARE & UN Women. Rapid Gender Analysis of Ukraine: Secondary Data Review 29 March 2022. https://careevaluations.org/wp-content/uploads/CARE-and-UN-Women-Ukraine-Rapid-Gender-Analysis_April-2022.pdf

³⁹ CARE and UN Women. Rapid Gender Analysis of Ukraine. 4 May 2022. <https://careevaluations.org/wp-content/uploads/Rapid-Gender-Analysis-of-Ukraine-4-May-2022.pdf>

⁴⁰ Moldova Refugee Inter-Agency. Gender-based violence sub-working group. Update #01. April 2022. <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/92068>

⁴¹ Statistica Moldovei and United Nations Moldova. Violence against Women in the Family in the Republic of Moldova. 1st Edition. 2011. https://statistica.gov.md/public/files/publicatii_electronice/Violenta/Raport_violen_fem_eng.pdf

⁴² Emergency Inter-agency referrals package for Moldova. 28 April 2022. <https://reliefweb.int/report/moldova/emergency-inter-agency-referrals-package-moldova-april-2022>

⁴³ Moldova Refugee Inter-Agency. Gender-based Violence Sub-Working Group. Update #02. May 2022. <https://reliefweb.int/report/moldova/gender-based-violence-sub-working-group-update-02-may-2022>

⁴⁴ UN Women, IOM, Women Count. Updated displacement survey: Ukrainian refugees and Third Country Nationals. Displacement patterns, needs and intentions survey. 9-27 March 2022. https://moldova.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-04/IOM_MDA_Updated_Displacement_Survey.pdf

⁴⁵ UNFPA Moldova. Free reproductive health services for Ukrainian refugees in the Republic of Moldova. 19 April 2022. <https://moldova.unfpa.org/en/news/free-reproductive-health-services-ukrainian-refugees-republic-moldova>

the access barriers and risks during the COVID-19 pandemic, since March 2020, medical abortion through the use of telemedicine has been provided in Moldova.⁴⁶

The clinical management of rape (CMR) was not available in Moldova before the crisis and, at the time of writing, is not yet in place for the refugee response.⁴⁷ At the time of writing, Standard Operating Procedures on CMR were being drafted, with planned training for health staff and post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) kits being accessible at all emergency units.⁴⁸

UNFPA has established “Orange Safe Spaces” in two key transit locations; the Palanca bus hub and the MoldExpo accommodation centre.⁴⁹ The safe spaces address the specific needs of women and girls by providing crucial GBV and SRH services (including post-rape treatment),⁵⁰ psychosocial support, particularly to survivors of GBV⁵¹, family planning, counselling and referrals⁵² as well as guidance on trafficking risks.⁵³

Trafficking

A report by Action Aid (27 April 2022) noted that trafficking in persons in the region occurs for a number of reasons, including sexual exploitation, forced labour and human organ trafficking.⁵⁴ People fleeing Ukraine are vulnerable to these different forms of trafficking due to the complex displacement context; the vulnerabilities during their journey and upon arrival in countries of destination.⁵⁵ UNODC research on trafficking related to the crisis in Ukraine (March 2022) found that economic need is one of the most often identified vulnerability factors for trafficking in persons.⁵⁶ Specific populations identified as having lower informational or economic resources in this context include: the Roma population, poorer women with dependents, persons with disabilities and people crossing illegally e.g. Ukrainian transgender women whose identification documents do not match their gender identities.⁵⁷

Prior to this current crisis, trafficking was a risk in Moldova. According to the 2021 Trafficking in Persons Report, Moldova was rated Tier 2, which acknowledges that, while the Government “does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking [it] is making significant efforts to do so.”⁵⁸ Women, children and persons with disabilities were identified as especially vulnerable to recruitment. Men are also considered as particularly vulnerable to recruitment by organised criminal groups for the purpose of labour exploitation.⁵⁹

Child protection

Reportedly, thousands of unaccompanied children have crossed the Ukrainian borders since the conflict began.⁶⁰ Child protection risks are seen to be particularly high for children separated from their parents/guardians and families, especially those separated from all family members.⁶¹ Most women are arriving and travelling without male family members, which creates significant protection risks, and particularly for those without other family support, limits the ability of mothers to provide quality care for children.⁶²

UNICEF has established seven Blue Dot points across Moldova, located at border crossing points, as well as near refugee triage and accommodation centres. The Blue Dot points aim to offer families and children services that

⁴⁶ Astra Network. Moldova introduces new National safe abortion standards. No Date. <https://astra.org.pl/moldova-introduces-ne-national-safe-abortion-standards/>

⁴⁷ Action Aid. Atria Mier and Jara Henar. Rapid Gender Analysis. Moldova – Ukraine crisis. 27 April 2022.

<https://reliefweb.int/report/moldova/ukraine-situation-moldova-actionaid-rapid-gender-analysis-27-april>

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Regional refugee response plan for the Ukraine situation. Moldova: Gender-based violence sub-working group. Update #2. May 2022.

<https://reliefweb.int/report/moldova/moldova-gender-based-violence-sub-working-group-update-02-may-2022>

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ UNHCR. Moldova refugee inter-agency coordination. Inter-agency update n.14. 30 April to 4 May.

<https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/92742>

⁵² UNFPA. Press Release. Women and girls in Ukraine and neighboring countries require urgent support. 19 April 2022.

<https://www.unfpa.org/press/women-and-girls-ukraine-and-neighboring-countries-require-urgent-support>

⁵³ UN Geneva. Moldova: A small country with a big heart. 8 May 2022. <https://www.ungeneva.org/en/news-media/news/2022/05/moldova-small-country-big-heart>

⁵⁴ Action Aid. Atria Mier and Jara Henar. Rapid Gender Analysis. Moldova – Ukraine crisis. 27 April 2022.

<https://reliefweb.int/report/moldova/ukraine-situation-moldova-actionaid-rapid-gender-analysis-27-april>

⁵⁵ UNODC. Conflict in Ukraine: Key evidence on risks of trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants. March 2022.

https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/tip/Conflict_Ukraine_TIP_2022.pdf

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ file:///C:/Users/christina.haneef.CARE_MAIL/Downloads/Rapid%20protection%20and%20gender%20analysis%20Moldova_27thApril.pdf

⁵⁸ Action Aid. Atria Mier and Jara Henar. Rapid Gender Analysis. Moldova – Ukraine crisis. 27 April 2022.

<https://reliefweb.int/report/moldova/ukraine-situation-moldova-actionaid-rapid-gender-analysis-27-april>

⁵⁹ IOM. Preventing trafficking and protecting victims in Moldova. <https://www.iom.int/preventing-trafficking-and-protecting-victims-moldova>

⁶⁰ Plan International, Ukraine Response. Rapid Needs Assessment Report. Joint report for Moldova, Poland and Romania. March 2022. Link not available.

⁶¹ The Child Protection Sub-Working Group. For coordination of child protection issues for the refugee response in Moldova. Terms of Reference. 5 May 2022. <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/92512>

⁶² Ibid.

meet urgent needs. This includes information and counselling, child-friendly spaces, psychological counselling and support, hygiene, health and nutrition services, as well as basic legal advice and referral services for cases of violence or health.⁶³ UNICEF is reportedly increasing the integration of GBV prevention and risk mitigation and adolescent-friendly services at the Blue Dot points.^{64, 65} Six additional [Blue Dot points](#) are being planned across the country.⁶⁶

Mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS)

The mental health of the refugee population is of paramount concern. An RGA conducted by CARE and UN Women in Ukraine (May 2022) found, of those consulted, 49 per cent women and 50 per cent men identified mental health as an area of their life most affected by the war, yet mental health services were seen as less of a priority (21 per cent women and 20 per cent men).⁶⁷ There is also little or no culture of seeking mental health support in Ukraine, particularly among men.⁶⁸ This means that some refugees will have pre-existing conditions that may be compounded with the current trauma.

A report by UN Women in May 2022 also highlighted structured psychosocial assistance for women and children as one of the key priorities identified by women's organisations due to existing MHPSS support being limited.⁶⁹

In May 2022, the Child Protection Sub-Working Group noted that children and female caregivers have experienced or witnessed violence, and the stress and uncertainty of displacement, is resulting in high levels of psychosocial distress.⁷⁰ There was no data on the specific mental health needs, concerns or impacts of specific groups such as Roma population, persons with disabilities and LGBTIQ+ individuals.

Impact of displacement on other groups

Older persons: A rapid needs assessment of older refugees conducted by Help Age International in March 2022 highlighted key concerns for the health and well-being of this population group. The report found that 62 per cent of older people reported that they were travelling with children. As most men under 60 have remained in Ukraine, largely due to the conscription requirements, many older people play a crucial role in providing care to children.⁷¹ With traditional gender roles being seen in Ukraine⁷², this may place additional caregiving responsibilities on older women. With regards to health, the assessment found that 28 per cent of older people need urgent medication, including for diabetes, blood pressure and pain relief. The potential for missed medication poses serious risks to their health and wellbeing. Noting that over one third of older people reported having issues accessing sufficient money, this situation was seen as particularly concerning. A total of 19 per cent of older people also reported that they need urgent medical assistance. This was often attributed to their lack of access to medicine. If violence escalates close to the border and if older people who are less mobile or people with more serious health needs start to arrive, we may assume that the need for urgent medical assistance for this population group will also increase.⁷³ Future analysis on the distinct needs of older women compared with older men would be valuable for understanding needs and barriers in accessing services and information, as well as issues around safety for both groups.

Persons with disabilities: The Disabilities Task Force, which is chaired by [Keystone Moldova](#) with the support of the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), is taking a leading role in finding solutions for persons with disabilities. The aim is to develop partnerships among NGOs in Moldova to bring together expertise and joint advocacy to support refugees with disabilities.⁷⁴ Specific initiatives outlined in Interagency Updates include:

⁶³ UNICEF Moldova. UNICEF activates the "Blue Dot" in Moldova. 15 March 2022. <https://www.unicef.org/moldova/en/press-releases/unicef-activates-%E2%80%9Eblue-dot-moldova>

⁶⁴ UNHCR. Moldova refugee inter-agency coordination. Interagency update. n. 15. 5-9 May. <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/92774>

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ UNICEF & UNHCR Ukraine situation – Moldova: Children and family protection hubs. 21 April 2022. <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/92198>

⁶⁷ CARE & UN Women. Rapid Gender Analysis of Ukraine. 4 May 2022. <https://careevaluations.org/wp-content/uploads/Rapid-Gender-Analysis-of-Ukraine-4-May-2022.pdf>

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ UN Women. Action Brief. A brief analysis on the gendered impacts of the crisis in Ukraine: A focus on Moldova. Link not available.

⁷⁰ The Child Protection Sub-Working Group. For coordination of child protection issues for the refugee response in Moldova. Terms of Reference. 5 May 2022. <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/92512>

⁷¹ Help Age International. Moldova: Rapid needs assessment of older refugees. 10 March 2022.

<https://www.alnap.org/system/files/content/resource/files/main/Rapid%20Needs%20of%20Older%20Refugees%20in%20Moldova%20-%2010-03-22%20-%203-Pager.pdf>

⁷² CARE & UN Women. Rapid Gender Analysis of Ukraine. 4 May 2022. <https://careevaluations.org/wp-content/uploads/Rapid-Gender-Analysis-of-Ukraine-4-May-2022.pdf>

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Keystone Human Services. Providing support for refugees with disabilities. 27 April 2022. <https://www.khs.org/providing-support-for-refugees-with-disabilities/>

accessible shelter, adapted transport, assistive equipment, rehabilitation services, psychological counselling, medications and ensuring persons with disabilities are registered. A hotline service that existed for persons with disabilities in Moldova has been expanded to the refugee population.⁷⁵ Through this hotline, people can access information, counselling and referrals to other services as well as having a monitoring system to follow up on the support provided.⁷⁶

Roma population: The Roma population face significant discrimination in Ukraine.⁷⁷ Within Moldova, the Roma represent one of the most vulnerable minority groups, including in areas of employment, health and education.⁷⁸ To date, the main protection risks facing Roma community members within this response include discrimination by host communities, barriers to accessing health, education and civil status documentation. In addition to this, a lack of cultural awareness in the planning and implementation of humanitarian activities may lead to further marginalization and stigmatization of this group.⁷⁹ The break-up of families and loss of male breadwinners is thought to have had increased impacts on Roma women due to their traditional reliance on men for support and protection. A GBV Sub-Cluster secondary data review (27 April 2022) reported that Roma families have found it difficult to find accommodation in neighbouring countries due to family size. In Moldova specifically, it was reported that Roma are separated by authorities from ethnic Ukrainians in an attempt to prevent tensions.⁸⁰

LGBTQIA+: In situations of forced displacement and armed conflict, LGBTQIA+ individuals are often at heightened risk of exclusion, exploitation, violence and abuse, and encounter distinct protection risks because of their real or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics (SOGIESC).⁸¹ In Moldova, individuals face discrimination based on their sexual orientation with such discrimination often seen to be advocated by public figures in political and religious spheres.⁸²

Recommendations

The recommendations below are aimed at all actors within the refugee response in Moldova, including national and local authorities, local and international humanitarian actors, volunteers, and donors. They have been developed in line with the many assessments reviewed for this RGA. Further analysis that includes primary data collection will inform more targeted recommendations to be made for specific population groups and particular sectors in the response.

Data and Analysis

- All actors should collect, analyse and report **sex-, age-, disability- and diversity-disaggregated data** through their services and interventions. This will ensure a greater understanding of the specific gender and intersectional needs, capacities and priorities of refugees and TCNs in Moldova. While UNHCR is collecting and analysing data by sex, age and nationality, they and other organisations are encouraged to extend the disaggregation by other factors such as disability.
- **Progressive rapid gender analysis** should be undertaken as the crisis continues, with a focus on the at-risk groups highlighted in current assessments. RGAs should be conducted with local partners including WROs, CSOs and NGOs to ensure they align with, and can support their assessment, programming and advocacy priorities. Thematic analysis will also be important to ensure programming is adapted to the changing needs of women, men, boys and girls in different groups. This might include, for instance, a focus on SRHR, Protection (including GBV and Child Protection), Shelter or Cash Assistance.

Women's participation, expertise and leadership

- Response approaches should prioritize the expertise and leadership of women and representatives from at-risk groups, as well as ensure equitable partnerships with local WRO, CSOs and NGOs. This is essential for the effective incorporation of feminist expertise, best practices and lessons learnt in the current conflict

⁷⁵ UNHCR. Moldova refugee inter-agency coordination. Moldova refugee response. Interagency update #8. 9-12 April 2022.

<https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/92076>

⁷⁶ Keystone Human Services. Providing support for refugees with disabilities. 27 April 2022. <https://www.khs.org/providing-support-for-refugees-with-disabilities/>

⁷⁷ CARE & UN Women. Rapid Gender Analysis of Ukraine. 4 May 2022. <https://careevaluations.org/wp-content/uploads/Rapid-Gender-Analysis-of-Ukraine-4-May-2022.pdf>

⁷⁸ <https://minorityrights.org/minorities/roma-22/>

⁷⁹ Roma Task Force. file:///C:/Users/christina.haneef/CARE_MAIL/Downloads/Inter%20Agency%205-9%20May_final.pdf

⁸⁰ GBV Sub-Cluster Ukraine. Gender-based violence. Secondary data review. 27 April 2022. <https://reliefweb.int/report/ukraine/ukraine-gender-based-violence-secondary-data-review-27-april-2022>

⁸¹ Protection Cluster Ukraine. Protection of LGBTQIA+ people in the context of the response in Ukraine. May 2022.

<https://reliefweb.int/report/ukraine/protection-lgbtq-people-context-response-ukraine>

⁸² The Danish Institute for Human Rights. Study on Homophobia, Transphobia and Discrimination on grounds of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity. Legal Report. Moldova. https://www.coe.int/t/Commissioner/Source/LGBT/MoldovaLegal_E.pdf

response, and will serve an important foundation for post-war and peacebuilding efforts.⁸³

Protection of Diverse Groups

- The Protection Cluster in Ukraine has developed comprehensive recommendations on the **protection of LGBTQIA+ people** in the context of the response in Ukraine. In consultation with relevant CSOs in Moldova, these should be adapted for the Moldovan context to ensure the assistance and protection needs of LGBTQIA+ individuals are met throughout the response.
- International actors should ensure co-ordination with the Roma Task Force under the Protection Working Group in Moldova to ensure that that **specific needs, priorities and concerns of Roma women, men, boys and girls** are understood and programming is adapted to ensure an inclusive response. This includes better understanding of the specific intersectional needs of Roma men, women, boys and girls with disabilities and chronic health conditions, for example.

Gender-based Violence and Sexual and Reproductive Health & Rights' Services, Facilities and Standards

- Ensure **GBV risk mitigation guidance** is developed and measures are integrated within RACs and private accommodation. Responding to the reports of the lack of vetting procedures of private accommodation and their hosts/staff and the risk of trafficking that the absence of such vetting presents, ensure appropriate vetting procedures are put in place and are monitored routinely. In addition, ensure those in accommodation have safe access to GBV referral information.
- All actors must **increase awareness of the GBV referral pathways** and provide continuous feedback on their efficacy to ensure the pathways are kept up to date. Regular consultations with communities should be undertaken to assess the awareness of the referral pathways among women or men and diverse groups such as the Roma, persons with disabilities and LGBTQIA+ persons, as well as barriers to accessing services and gaps in services provided the same groups encounter.
- All procedures at border crossings, including those related to documentation checks, screening, temporary accommodation, onwards transport and information-sharing must routinely **integrate considerations around trafficking** and all personnel, including security staff, volunteers, contractors, etc., at border crossings must receive awareness training on recognising the signs of trafficking, at-risk groups, how and where to intervene or report suspicions of trafficking, how to address disclosures of GBV and relevant referral pathways. They should also be required to sign a Code of Conduct.
- All actors should **monitor the accessibility of the free SRH services for refugee women and girls** as the crisis continues, ensuring all women and girls from diverse groups can access information regarding their entitlements, can physically access services, as well as to understand any barriers to their access and gaps in service delivery.
- All humanitarian actors should **prioritise support to national and local systems, as well as to national and local CSOs and NGOs** to scale up the response. This includes ensuring access to holistic survivor-centred GBV and SRH services for refugees and host communities. Donors should ensure longer-term funding is available to support system strengthening and capacity building, not only focused on the immediate response needs.
- All RACs and private accommodation should ensure spaces for women to **breastfeed** and the availability of **gender- and age-appropriate hygiene kits** for women and adolescent girls.

Equal Access to Information and Feedback

- All actors should **ensure information on refugees' rights and available response services is disseminated and communicated** through multiple channels and in accessible formats to take into account language barriers, access and mobility constraints, access to and level of comfort with technology as well as preferences to receiving information. In the same way, feedback and complaints mechanisms should also allow for multiple channels that are gender- and age-appropriate.

⁸³ National Coalition "Life without violence" Quick assessment regarding the women, peace and security cooperation framework in Moldova in the context of war in Ukraine and refugee crisis. April 2022.