



4 locations covered

95 surveys administered (81 female 14 male) covering sample of 299 persons

7 KIIs conducted (4 female 3 male)

From 24 February to 31 May, it is estimated that over 74,000 Ukrainians entered the Western Balkans (WB) following the outbreak of the armed conflict in Ukraine.¹ In the same period, nearly 23,000 Ukrainians entered Montenegro, of which nearly 15,000 left the country. As of 29 May, about 7,700 Ukrainians who have fled the armed conflict were present in Montenegro, a proportionally higher figure than the previous assessment conducted, when about 6,000 Ukrainians were registered in the country.² Interestingly, the Ukrainian refugee population currently represents 1.2% of the official Montenegrin population.³ Most of them stay in the coastal area of the country, with friends or relatives or by renting houses/apartments.⁴ The cities with the greatest presence of Ukrainians are Budva, Bar, Herceg Novi, Tivat and Podgorica.⁵

Between 19 and 31 May, IOM conducted the second rapid displacement and needs assessment in Montenegro in four locations (Podgorica, Bar, Budva, Herceg Novi) to gather up-to-date information and verify any changes, particularly in terms of the unmet needs of the target population. Compared to the first assessment conducted ([available here](#)), this time, the IOM has focused on the coastal area, excluding Bijelo Polje as currently fewer Ukrainians are present there. IOM has decided to focus and prioritize Montenegro as the country continues to have the highest percentage of Ukrainian refugees currently residing in the WB (almost two-thirds of the total Ukrainians present), mainly due to cultural ties, as many have been to the country at other times for tourism reasons or as home/apartment owners but also because the Ukrainian community previously established in the country serves as a pull factor for many fleeing their war-torn homeland. On 13 March 2022, the government of Montenegro issued the decision on granting temporary protection to all persons fleeing Ukraine for a period of one year, renewable. The procedure for obtaining temporary protection should last up to 30 days from the date of submission of the application, during which period, applicants receive a confirmation of submission according to which the most vulnerable categories, such as pregnant women, the chronically ill, children, persons with urgent health problems, can immediately access health care. However, of the 2,530 requests for temporary protection submitted as of March 13, of which 70 per cent adults (76% female and 24% male) and 30 per cent children (of which 23% under 5 years of age), only 434 requests had been resolved.⁶

BASELINE PROFILE

Between 24 and 31 May, in Montenegro, the IOM conducted interviews with seven key informants (KIs) and administered a short survey to 95 Ukrainian refugees, through which information on 299 persons was collected.

Compared to the first assessment conducted, the situation has completely reversed. Whereas previously most of the Ukrainians surveyed (73%) had reported being offered apartments/houses versus 27 per cent who were renting apartments/houses, now almost two third (64%) declared staying in rented apartments/houses, 16 per cent in offered apartments/houses, 12 per cent with family/friends, 5 per cent are in hotels and less than 3 per cent declared owning a house.

Sex and age disaggregated data confirmed that most Ukrainian refugees interviewed are females (85%), while males count for 15 per cent. The main age of respondents was 40, with the youngest person interviewed being 21 years old and the oldest 78 years old. Out of the total

respondents, 38 per cent were below 18 years old (59% boys and 41% girls). Among these, 26 per cent were children under 5 years of age. Compared to the previous assessment, the number of children under 5 years of age increased by 8 percentage points, while the sex breakdown reversed with more boys than girls.

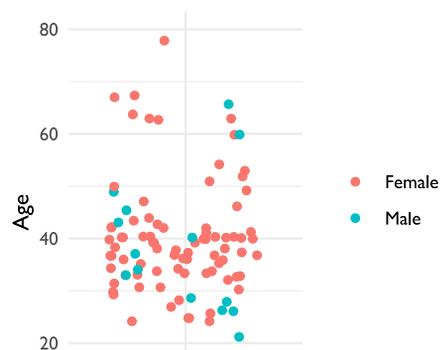


Figure 1. Sex and age distribution of Ukrainian refugees interviewed

1. According to the border police, there is also an in and out movement of Russian nationals, but no significant and stable presence. As of February 24, around 20,000 Russian nationals have been registered entering the country, but almost all of them have already left.
2. In addition to these, there are around 2,000 Ukrainians who are regular residents of Montenegro
3. According to the most recent figure available to the World Bank, the population of Montenegro in 2020 was 621,306 people. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?locations=ME>
4. "Offered" means that Ukrainian refugees are (temporarily) given apartments/houses/hotel rooms free of charge by nationals of Montenegro and others, while the term "rented" refers to apartments/houses for which Ukrainian refugees are paying money to rent them. There are currently two collective centers in the country with a capacity of around 120 beds each, however Ukrainians refuse to move there due to the poor living conditions offered.
5. As of 23 May, official registrations to stay up to 90 days were as follow: 2,914 in Budva, 1,158 in Bar, 757 in Tivat and 578 in Podgorica. Since 24 February a total of 6,029 registration to stay up to 90 days were recorded by the Montenegrin authorities.
6. The data refer as of 31 May 2022.

Profile, intentions and needs

19 – 31 May

As per the previous assessment, the level of education of the interviewed sample is particularly high, with more than half of Ukrainian refugees declaring having a bachelor's or master's degree (67%), followed by 21 per cent who finished secondary school, and 12 per cent who finished technical and vocational trainings.



Figure 2. Main regions of origin of Ukrainian refugees residing in Montenegro

The top seven regions (oblast) of refugees' origin were Kyiv (35%), Kharkiv (18%), Dnipropetrovsk (16%), Donetsk (9%), Odessa (7%), Kherson and Mykolaiv (4%), Lviv (2%), Cherkasy, Chernivtsi, Zaporizhzhia and Zhytomyr (1% each).

Of those interviewed, 93 per cent were traveling in group while the remaining 7 per cent were traveling alone (with no children). Of those traveling in groups, 50 per cent were traveling with children and other family members (a significant reduction of nearly 26 per cent from the previous assessment), 25 per cent only with children, 14 per cent with other persons, and 6 per cent were traveling with friends or neighbors. When asked if anyone helped them organize the journey, the majority (96%) declared they were not helped.

Of the respondents, nine per cent (or 27 respondents) said they have a serious health condition, such as a chronic disease, pregnancy or breastfeeding, or disability. As with the previous assessment, most of the Ukrainians interviewed (83%) stated that they had not applied for asylum.

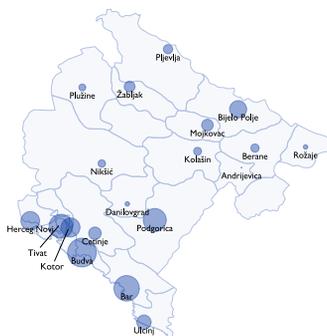


Figure 3. Presence of Ukrainian refugees based on the number of those who registered to stay up to 90 days from 24 February to 06 April 2022. Source: Border Police of Montenegro

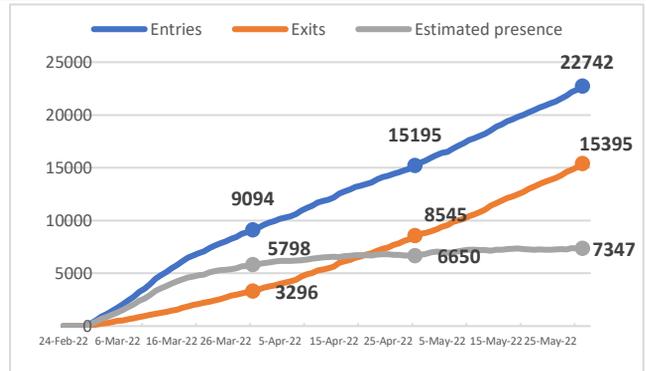


Figure 4. Entries, exits and estimated presence trends of Ukrainian refugees in Montenegro from 24 February to 31 May

An additional question was added to this round to understand if respondents had requested temporary protection: 87 per cent declared they had requested it. Among the stated reasons for not seeking asylum or temporary protection, many declared they do not need to do so as they will only stay in Montenegro until the end of the war as their main intention is to return home. Interestingly, among those who did not apply for temporary protection, the majority said they were in Montenegro as tourists; while among those not wanting to seek for asylum, some said they did not want to be seen as refugees.

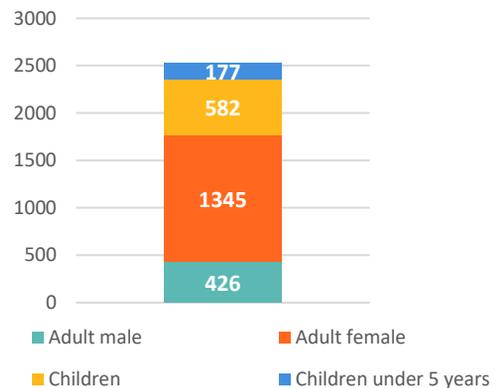


Figure 5. Number of temporary protection requests lodged per category, as of 31 May

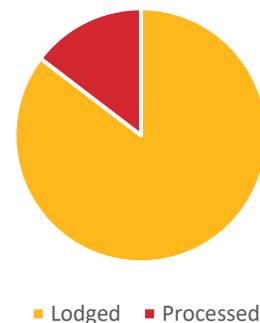


Figure 6. Ratio between temporary protection requests lodged and processed, as of 31 May

INTENTIONS

When asked how long they intend to stay in Montenegro, almost two thirds of respondents (58%) said they will stay in the country until the war ends and then return to Ukraine, followed by 19 per cent who plan to stay for up to 6 months,⁷ 9 per cent who do not know yet, 8 per cent who intend to stay in Montenegro and start a new life, and 6 per cent who said they intend to stay for a year and then return to Ukraine.

As for their interest in finding a job in Montenegro, no significant changes were recorded. Therefore, as per the previous assessment, half of the respondents (52%) said they do not intend to look for a job opportunity while in Montenegro, followed by 32 per cent who said they are interested, 13 per cent who do not know and 2 per cent who are already working. Regarding the possible employment sector, the most frequently reported was the health sector (19%), followed by the service sector, including tourism and personal care (16%), the education sector (13%), the financial/real estate sector (11%), the construction and transport sector (8%), and the ICT, public administration and trade sectors (less than 2% each).

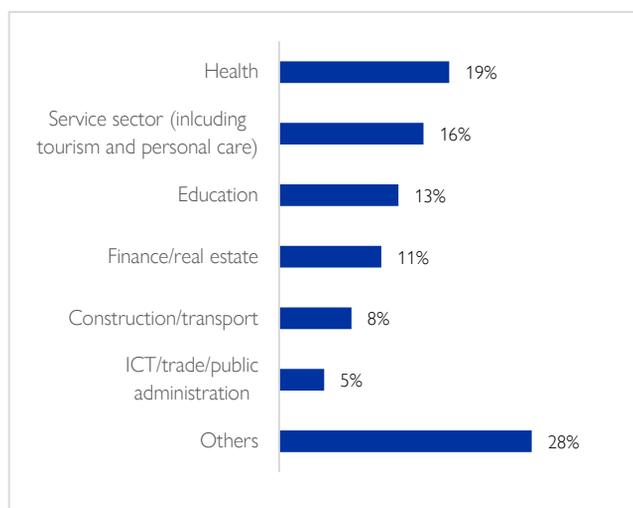


Figure 7. Main employment sector declared by those who said they are interested in looking for a job opportunity while in Montenegro.

NEEDS

Compared to the previous round, the qualitative data collected showed that an increasing number of Ukrainian refugees currently residing in Montenegro will soon need immediate support. This is mainly due to the upcoming summer season, which strongly affects some key factors, also underlining the urgency of the situation. According to all the KIs interviewed, two thirds of them could be facing very serious problems, already starting from June 1, especially in terms of financial support and accommodation. The financial capacities of the refugees slowly running out and the prolonged nature of the armed conflict in Ukraine are the main reasons for these early warnings.⁸

To corroborate this thesis, informants from the Red Cross and the "Volunteers' Headquarters" stated they noticed an increase in the number of persons who approach them daily, especially for basic support such as the provision of food and non-food items (NFIs). At the same time, the lack of food and NFIs was highlighted by them as one of their most immediate needs as they are completely dependent on private donations, mainly from the local community. But over time, they have recorded fewer donations, due to the changing perception of the local population towards Ukrainian refugees and the war in Ukraine, influenced by the media reporting.⁹

Overall, all KIs agreed that the main needs of Ukrainian refugees are accommodation, recognition of legal status and psychosocial support, especially for children. The three are strongly intertwined, making them even more urgent to tackle.

As for the accommodation situation of Ukrainian refugees in the country, it has worsened considerably over the past two months. As Montenegro is a country that relies heavily on tourism, especially in summer, all KIs stated that Ukrainians who are renting or have been offered a house/apartment have received information from their owners that they will soon have to leave due to the beginning of the high season and an increasing number of requests from tourists. Alternatively, many have been asked to advance 6 to 12 months' rent to secure their stay.¹⁰ Interestingly, those who cannot afford it or have no relatives or friends in Montenegro have shared their intention to return to Ukraine. This information corresponds to and is completed with the quantitative data collected presented in paragraph 1. *Baseline.*

7. Interestingly, some of the Ukrainians interviewed said they want to return to Ukraine very soon, planning to move in the next few days after the interview. Of these, most reported financial resources, food and NFI as things they need support for.

8. So far, many Ukrainian refugees have had access to houses/apartments rented or offered by Montenegrin residents, however as the summer season approaches, this may no longer be guaranteed.

9. Given that a small part of the Ukrainian population is quite wealthy and therefore visible, the Montenegrin population begins to doubt that they are in real need.

10. The average cost for a family is between 400 and 600 euros per month in the low season.

Profile, intentions and needs

19 – 31 May

Regarding the legal status of Ukrainians in relation of the procedures in place for applying for temporary protection, all KIs highlighted the existence of difficulties, mainly in terms of timing and complexity of the procedure itself. It is worth pointing out that many Ukrainians have decided to apply for temporary protection only recently,¹¹ leading to a backlog of the system that prevents immediate access to status-related rights and services, such as health, education and employment, undermining the dignity of refugees. As of May 29, only 434 requests had been resolved out of 2,530 submitted.¹²

This is of particular concern when it comes to children for whom, in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, these rights must be guaranteed regardless of the request for protection status, pursuing the best interests of the child in any context and recognizing their unique vulnerability. And this is particularly relevant when it comes to school enrollment, which is currently completely lacking and for which it is necessary to advocate for a rapid inclusion in the autumn, given the school disruption already impacted them, putting their learning at stake.

An additional factor to be taken into consideration is that there are also a substantial number of Ukrainians who have not requested temporary protection nor stay up to 90 days since in the latter case a daily tax of 1 euro per person must be paid, which strongly affects the resources available to them.

Regarding psychosocial support activities, all KIs stressed the extreme need to have ongoing activities in support of the mental health of Ukrainian refugees in Montenegro. This concerns both the opportunity of a job for adults, and of having spaces/centers for the daily care of children, where they can carry out pedagogical and recreational activities, including language courses.¹³

It is paramount to underline that the enjoyment of these rights and services is strictly linked to the issue of the identification number (ID) relating to the recognition of temporary protection status. As in the previous assessment, the triangulation of quantitative data confirmed the same needs, with particular emphasis on the need to have spaces or activities for children, financial support, access to health, language courses, food, NFIs and medicines.

Unlike the previous assessment conducted, only 37 per cent of respondents (previously 74%) declared they had received some form of humanitarian assistance, mainly in terms of food and NFIs, compared with 67 per cent who did not. This number highlights a decrease in support for the Ukrainian population and strengthens findings gathered through qualitative data.

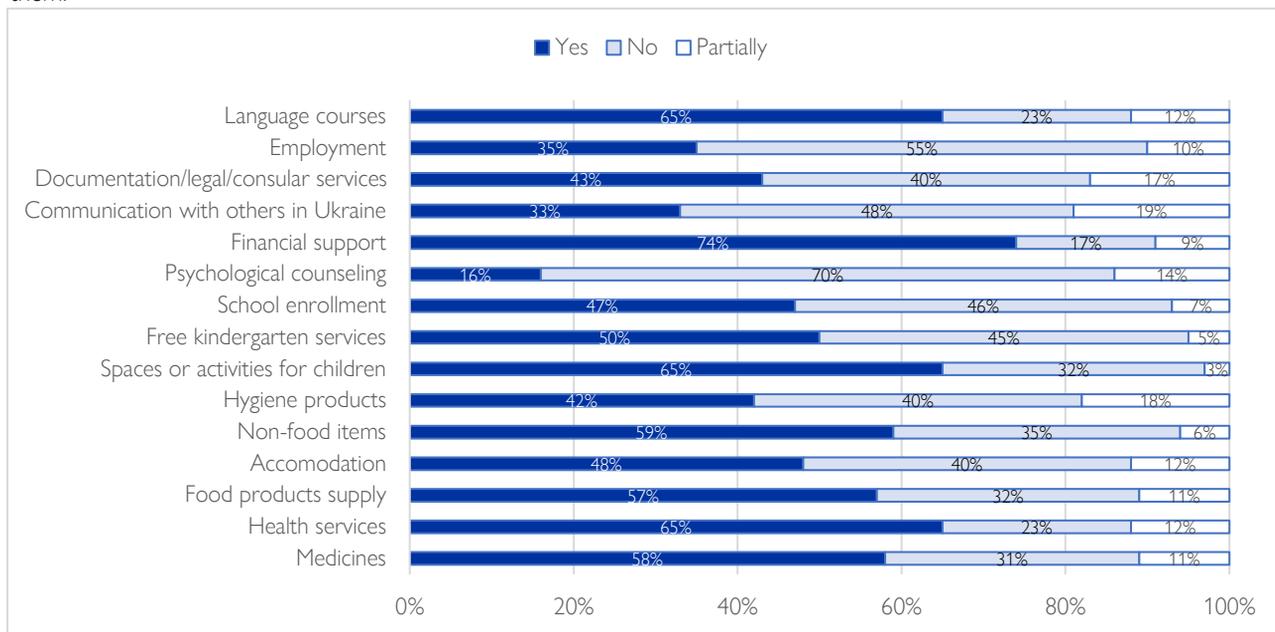


Figure 8. Things for which Ukrainian refugees need support for themselves and/or their family members

11. Most Ukrainians believed that the war would not last long and therefore did not want to apply.

12. The application for temporary protection does not in itself allow immediate access to rights and services such as access to suitable accommodation, necessary assistance in terms of social welfare and means of subsistence, medical care, access to education to children and engagement in employed or self-employed activities; only once the request has been processed is it possible to separately request a unique identification number (ID) through which it is possible to access the aforementioned rights and services.

13. The Red Cross, together with UNICEF and UNHCR, is conducting local language teaching workshops and recreational activities for children and adults. However, according to the KIS, the funds are not sufficient to cover all needs.

A worrying figure emerges when Ukrainians are asked if they have been consulted on their urgent needs: compared to the previous assessment, there has been a drastic reduction in the support provided by both humanitarian organizations and government institutions. This time, only 40 per cent stated they had been consulted by humanitarian organizations (compared to 64% the previous time) and 9 per cent by government institutions (compared to almost 50% the previous time).¹⁵

Among the main challenges the respondents declared facing in their current location, there are psychological and physical distress (24%), difficulties in acquiring documents (13%), separation from family members (12%), personal safety (10%), lack of information on available assistance (6%), limited access to water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) facilities (5%), absence of separate spaces for women and girls.

Interestingly, unlike the first assessment, most of the Ukrainians surveyed said they received information about the support and services available for displaced people from Ukraine mainly from social media (80%), followed by volunteers (22%), the Red Cross (13%), SMS/call (12%), United Nations (UN) agencies (7%), government agencies (6%), other service providers and non-governmental organizations (5%).

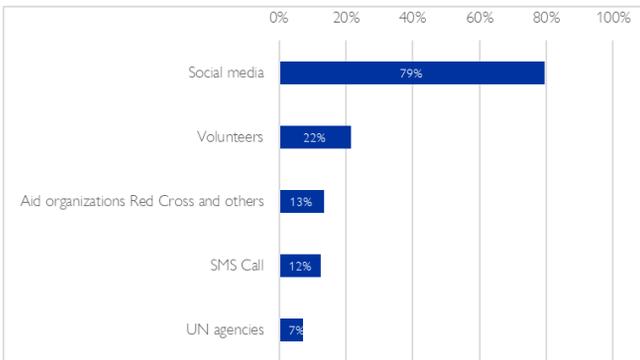


Figure 9. Actors from which Ukrainian refugees declared to have received information about available support and services.

14. This result should be considered representative only for the Ukrainian population interviewed in the four locations covered by the assessment as the sampling could have led to bias as most of the respondents are among the people in need orbiting around the Red Cross and the “Volunteers’ Headquarters” premises.

15. In five locations in Montenegro (Herceg Novi, Tivat, Bar, Budva and Podgorica), “Volunteers’ Headquarters” have been established by Ukrainian nationals already residing in Montenegro, with the assistance of the Embassy of Ukraine and with the support of municipal administrations. These offices mainly provide assistance to Ukrainian refugees in filling out applications for temporary protection, and in terms of food and non-food items is distributed to those in need.

METHODOLOGY

Design of the data collection

The exercise aimed to provide more in-depth information on Ukrainian refugees residing in Montenegro in terms of profile, intentions and needs to provide additional information to first line responders, national authorities and the donor community, as well as to support a better and tailored-specific response to those in need.

Data collection methods

The rapid displacement and needs assessment used a multi-source and multi-method approach to obtain qualitative and quantitative data from a wide range of stakeholders. The IOM enumerators conducted focus group discussions and interviews with KIs and officials from the Embassy of Ukraine in Montenegro, members of the Border Police, and representatives of the municipal board of Red Cross of Bar, Budva and Herceg Novi. In addition, a short survey was administered directly to the refugee population of Ukraine. The questionnaire consisted of three main sections: baseline profile, intentions and needs.

Data collection period

The data collection exercise was conducted from 19 to 31 May 2022.

Geographical coverage

Geographical coverage is limited to a select number of locations in Montenegro, chosen by IOM for their known high presence of Ukrainian refugees. The information was collected in four locations: Podgorica, the capital, Bar, Budva and Herceg Novi on the coastal side of the country.

Target population

Ukrainian refugees departing from Ukraine starting from February 24, 2022. In particular, the IOM has targeted those who visit the premises of the Red Cross, the “Volunteers’ headquarters”⁶, and the collective center in the selected locations.

Enumerators

A total of five IOM enumerators were deployed to conduct the data collection.

Limitations and constraints

The data collection exercise was conducted in a select number of locations, not covering the whole country. Language barriers are a major constraint as there is only one official Ukrainian language interpreter in the whole country.

Ethics and consent

No personal information was collected during the data collection exercise. All respondents were informed of the voluntary nature and anonymity of the information collected. Respondents were verbally asked to give their consent to IOM’s use of the information. All interviews were conducted in a safe environment either in the Red Cross premises and in the “Volunteers’ Headquarters”.¹⁵

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