

Profile, intentions and needs

07 July – 15 August 2022



12 locations
covered

61 surveys administered (52 females, 9 males) covering a sample of 136 persons

3 KIIs conducted (2 females, 1 male)

From 24 February to 15 August, it is estimated that around 182,000 Ukrainians entered the Western Balkans (VWB) following the outbreak of the armed conflict in Ukraine. It is estimated that over the period from 24 February to 15 August, nearly 16,000 Ukrainians entered North Macedonia, of which nearly 13,000 left the country. Most of them stay in Skopje, with friends or relatives or by renting houses/apartments. The cities where there is the greatest presence of refugees from Ukraine are Skopje, Bitola, Prilep and Ohrid. Between 07 July and 15 August, IOM conducted the rapid displacement and needs assessment in North Macedonia in cooperation with the Red Cross in twelve selected locations. The refugees from Ukraine are coming to North Macedonia mainly due to cultural ties, as many have been to the country at other times for tourism reasons but also because the Ukrainian community previously established in the country, despite being small, serves as a pull factor for the ones fleeing their war-torn homeland. The Law on Foreigners allows Ukrainian nationals entering North Macedonia to apply for temporary residence on humanitarian grounds for a period of one year with the possibility of extending it for a further period of five years. The temporary protection, similar to the Temporary Protection Directive 2001/55/EC adopted by the European Council on 4 March, has not been activated. At the time of the assessment, a total of 246 persons were granted temporary protection on humanitarian grounds and 4 persons applied for asylum.¹ Concurrently, 213 Ukrainian nationals registered with the Red Cross to be provided with humanitarian assistance. Furthermore, the government of North Macedonia has approved a soft measure to allow Ukrainian nationals to register with the Public Health Insurance Fund and cover their monthly fee, guaranteeing them the right to use the services of public health medical facilities and services.

BASELINE PROFILE

Between 24 July and 15 August, in North Macedonia, the IOM, in cooperation with Red Cross, conducted interviews with 3 key informants (KIs) and administered a short survey to 61 refugees from Ukraine, through which information on 136 persons was collected. The selected sample is made up of refugees from Ukraine who signed up for assistance from the Red Cross.

Most Ukrainian nationals surveyed (49%) had reported being in rented apartments/houses versus 45 per cent who were hosted by family/friends and 3.8 per cent stayed in offered apartments/houses. Sex and age disaggregated data showed that most refugees from Ukraine interviewed are females (85%), while males count for 15 per cent. The mean age of respondents was 42.6, with the youngest person interviewed 14 years old and the oldest 80 years old.

Out of the total sample, 28 per cent were below 18 years old (47% boys and 53% girls). Among these, seven per cent were children under 5 years of age.

Almost two-thirds of surveyed Ukrainian nationals (63%) reported to be in a marriage, less than one-third (24%) were single, and a small portion is either divorced or widowed. More than two-thirds of Ukrainian refugees declared having entered North Macedonia through Bulgaria and Serbia. Half of the refugees from Ukraine interviewed did not travel more than 3 days from Ukraine.

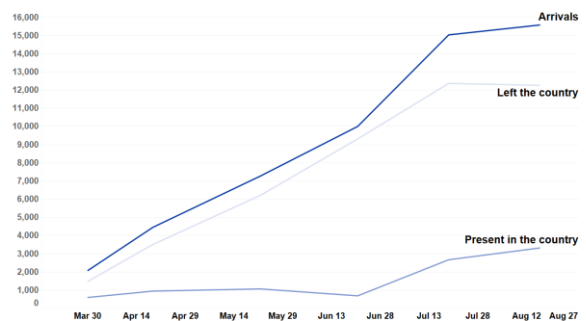


Figure 1. Entries, exits and estimated presence trends of Ukrainian refugees in North Macedonia from 24 February to 15 August 2022

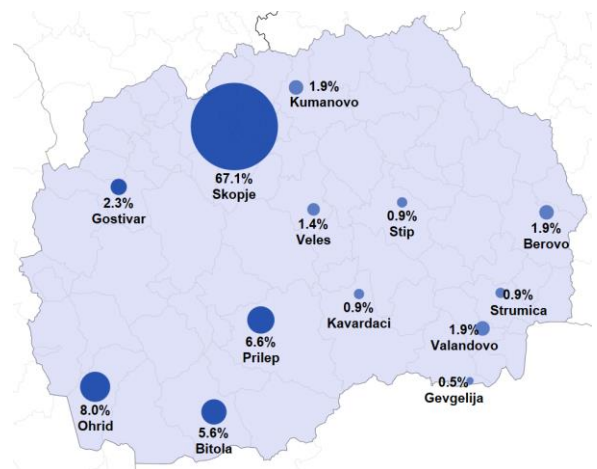


Figure 2. Presence of Ukrainian refugees based on the number of those who registered to stay up to 90 days from 24 February to 15 August 2022. Source: Red Cross of North Macedonia

1. As per the national Census 2021, there are around 166 Ukrainian nationals who are regular residents of North Macedonia.

Profile, intentions and needs

07 July – 15 August 2022

The level of education of the interviewed sample is particularly high, with more than half of refugees from Ukraine declaring they have a bachelor's or master's degree (79%), followed by 9.8 per cent who finished technical and vocational training and 8.2 percent who reported having finished primary education or secondary school, while 3 per cent declared having finished other forms of education.

The top five regions (oblast) of refugees' origin were Kharkiv (31%), Kyiv (22,4%), Zaporizhzhia (10,3%) Dnipropetrovsk and Odessa (6.9% each).

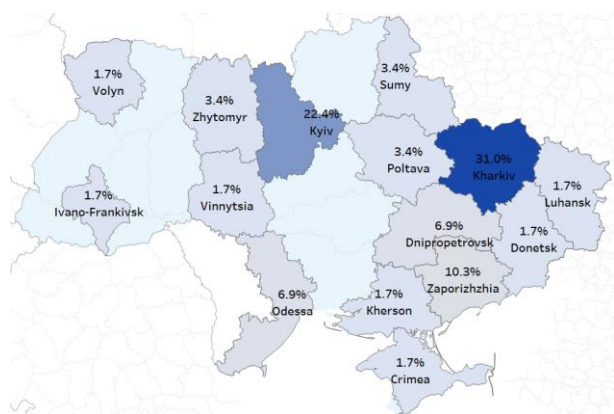


Figure 3. Main regions of origin of Ukrainian refugees residing in North Macedonia

Of the sample, two thirds (67%) traveled in groups, while the remaining third (33%) traveled alone (without children). Of those traveling in groups, 53 per cent were traveling only with children, 7.9 per cent with children and other family members, 32 per cent with other family members or relatives, 5.3 per cent with someone else and 2.6 per cent with friends and neighbors. When asked if anyone had helped them organize the journey, more than half (54%) said they had been helped.

Of the sample, eight per cent reported having specific needs or a serious health condition, including chronic illness, pregnancy or breastfeeding, persons with disabilities.

All Ukrainians interviewed said they had not applied for asylum. Among the stated reasons for not seeking asylum, many said they do not need to do so as they will only stay in North Macedonia until the war is over as their main intention is to return home.²

Interestingly, among those who did not apply for temporary residence on humanitarian grounds, the majority said they were in North Macedonia as tourists; while among those who said they did not want to seek asylum, some said they did not want to be seen as refugees.

INTENTIONS

When asked how long they intend to stay in North Macedonia, more than half of respondents (55%) said they will stay in the country until the war ends and then return to Ukraine, followed by 14 per cent who do not know yet, 12 per cent who said they intend to stay for a year and then return to Ukraine, 6 per cent who said they will stay for few months, 4 per cent who intend to stay in North Macedonia and start a new life, 4 per cent who intend to stay for at least one year and 2 per cent who will decide depending on the situation.

As for their interest in finding a job in North Macedonia, almost half of the respondents (47%) said they do intend to look for a job opportunity while in North Macedonia, followed by 28 per cent who said they are not interested in looking for an employment, 15 per cent who are already working and 10 per cent who do not know yet.³

Regarding the possible employment sector, the most desired are the trade (15.4%), followed by the restaurant and hotels sector (11.5%), service sector, health sector, education sector, construction sector (7.7% each), public administration, manufacturing sector and financial/real estate sector (less than 4 % each).

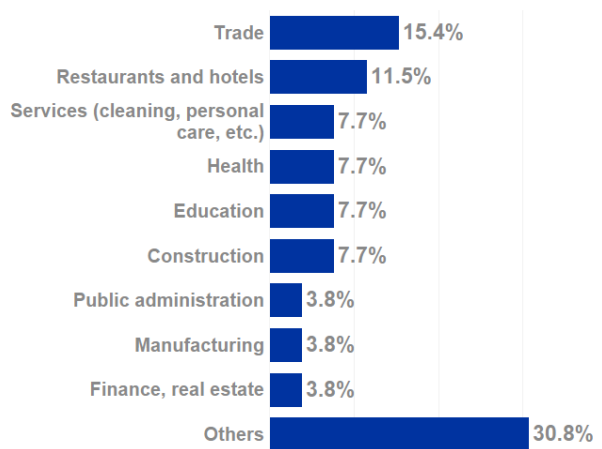


Figure 4. Main employment sector declared by those who said they are interested in looking for a job opportunity while in North Macedonia.

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

3. Of those who intend to look for the job, 61 per cent have a bachelor's degree, 18 per cent have master's degree (or higher), 11 per cent have attended technical and vocational trainings and 7.1 per cent have a secondary school education (3.6 per cent have some other form of education). Of those who declared they already work, 89 per cent have a bachelor's degree.

Profile, intentions and needs

07 July – 15 August 2022

The Kis from the Red Cross and the Association of Ukrainians of North Macedonia declared they noticed an increase in the number of persons approaching them on a daily basis, especially to ask support for basic services such as the provision of food and non-food items (NFI). In addition, they started asking for financial support for accommodation as well as support for the host families (friends and relatives). The Red Cross has obtained funds from the Government of North Macedonia as well as from the International Federation of the Red Cross in Geneva, which will be mainly used for winterization and to support the host families. These costs will also cover the monthly rate of medical insurance for the most vulnerable families from Ukraine. Furthermore, the Association of Ukrainians in the country, whose work is mainly based on private donations, distributes these to all Ukrainians present, regardless of whether they are beneficiaries of the the Red Cross and the length of their stay.

NEEDS

Regarding the legal status of Ukrainians in relation to the procedures for applying for temporary residence on humanitarian grounds, all KIs confirmed that the process is not overly complex but that they need further support. Mainly in terms of clear information provided in the Ukrainian language, including information on the timing and complexity of the procedure itself.

It is worth noting that many Ukrainians have only recently decided to apply for temporary residence on humanitarian grounds as their 90 days visa-free stay has expired. As of 24 February, a total of 346 temporary residence permits have been granted.

According to the KIs, the enrollment of children in school is of particular importance, notably with regard to school enrollment, which is currently completely lacking and for which it is necessary to advocate for rapid inclusion in it, given the school disruption in Ukraine already impacted them, by putting their learning at stake.

Regarding psychosocial support activities, all KIs stressed the extreme need to have ongoing activities in support of the mental health of Ukrainian refugees in North Macedonia. They also expressed the need for work for adults and for spaces/centers for the daily care of children, where they can carry out pedagogical and recreational activities, including language courses.⁵

Seventy-eight per cent of respondents declared they had received some form of humanitarian assistance, mainly in terms of food, personal hygiene and clothes.

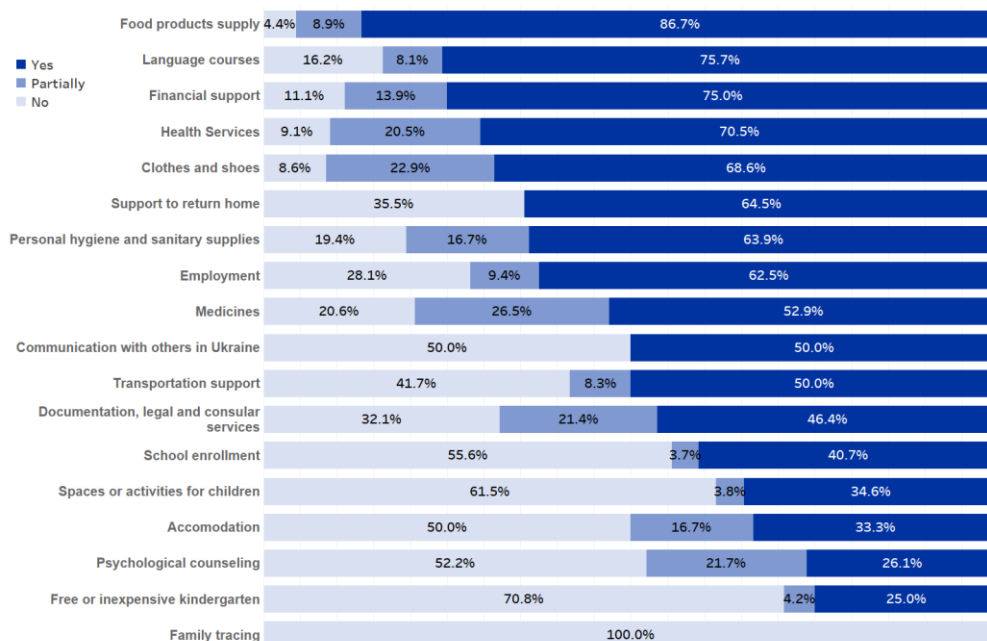


Figure 5. Things for which refugees from Ukraine need support for themselves and/or their family members

4. The Red Cross is conducting local language teaching workshops and preparing space for recreational activities for children and adults. Currently, there are 45 persons who are attending the language school. However, according to the KIs, the funds are not sufficient to cover all existing needs.

Profile, intentions and needs

07 July – 15 August 2022

Regarding the support provided to the refugee population from Ukraine, 58 per cent of the respondents declared they were consulted on their urgent needs by humanitarian organizations and 21 per cent by government institutions.

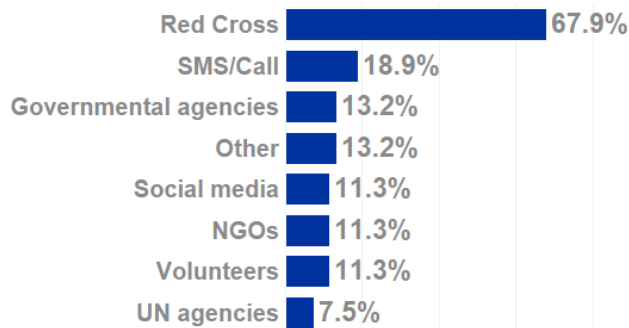


Figure 6. Actors from which Ukrainian refugees declared to have received information about available support and services.

Among the main challenges reported by respondents to be faced in the place where they currently reside is the lack of information on the assistance available (30.8%), documents acquisition (21.2%), psychological and emotional distress (19.2%), separation from family members (13.5%), personal safety (7.7%), and absence of separate spaces for women and girls and limited access to latrines (1.9% each).

Furthermore, most of the Ukrainians surveyed said they received information on the support and services available for displaced people from Ukraine mainly from the Red Cross (67.9%), followed by SMS/call (18.9%), government agencies and other service providers (13.2% each), followed by social media, non-governmental organizations and volunteers (each 11%) and United Nation (UN) agencies (7.5%).

Lastly, when asked to list the top priority needs, the most frequently reported words are safety, employment, food and health.

METHODOLOGY

Design of the data collection

The exercise aimed to provide more in-depth information on refugees from Ukraine residing in North Macedonia 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 range of stakeholders. The IOM enumerators conducted focus group discussions and interviews with KIs in North Macedonia, members of Red Cross and the association of Ukrainians in North Macedonia. 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 07 July to 15 August 2022.

Geographical coverage

Geographical coverage is limited to a select number of locations in North Macedonia. This result should be considered representative only of the Ukrainian population interviewed in the 12 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.

Target population

IOM has targeted those who regularly visit the Red Cross premises and register for humanitarian assistance.

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 are only five official Ukrainian language interpreter in the whole country. A household representative sample strategy was applied, where 61 representatives provided information about 136 Ukrainian refugees in North Macedonia. About 40 families were not found at the addresses where they were registered and 8 of them refused to participate in the survey.

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 on Red Cross premises.

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