GORSTRA
RESEARCH GROUP

UKRAINE DISPLACEMENT REPORT

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<u>Demographics</u>

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On 24 February 2022, the outbreak of the Ukrainian war led to an influx of <u>war refugees</u>. As of 31 January 2023, the <u>UNHCR recorded</u> 8,046,560 refugees from Ukraine in Europe. This corresponds to approximately 19% of the Ukrainian population (according to Eurostat population data in 2021). It is estimated that 18.1 million people left Ukraine and 10.0 million returned. However, since the Schengen Area allows Ukrainian citizens to <u>move freely between EU member states</u> without a visa, it is difficult to establish the exact number of refugees who have actually arrived in the EU member states.

Geographical locations

In terms of geographical locations of refugees, <u>Russian media</u> has reported that Russia is the country with the highest number of refugees from Ukraine and Donbas, with 4.5 million refugees recorded as of October 3, 2022. It should be noted that Donbas is composed of Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine which held <u>referendums</u> on their status in 2014, with 89% and 96% respectively <u>voting</u> in favour of "self-rule", <u>joining Russia</u>. The referendums and their results were viewed as illegal by Ukraine and undemocratic by the <u>international community</u>. Nonetheless, <u>Russia supported</u> the establishment of the so-called Donetsk and Luhansk "republics". Thus, <u>Russian media</u> perceives Donbas as being separate from Ukraine.

However, the <u>reported number</u> of Ukrainian refugees in Russia is open to doubt. While the <u>Statista Research Department</u> and <u>The Brookings Institution</u> also report Russia as having the highest number of refugees from Ukraine, it provides a much lower number of approximately 2.8 million. In addition, there is <u>evidence</u> that the refugee movement to Russia is at least partly involuntary, with Ukrainians being <u>forcibly transferred</u> to Russia. There are also <u>reports</u> of people being snatched from their homes and sent away to Russia for ideological screening, prolonged detention, and even starvation and torture. Given that Russian media is known <u>not to be free and independent</u>, there is also a high probability that the data on the refugees are subject to manipulation.

Other countries with the <u>highest numbers of refugees</u> from Ukraine include Poland with 1,563,386 refugees, Germany with 1,055,323 refugees, and the Czech Republic with 486,133 refugees, as of January 2023 data. A <u>major reason</u> why Poland is such a favoured destination is its 500-kilometers long shared border with Ukraine, its cultural and linguistic similarity to Ukraine, and the existing population of more than a million Ukrainians already living and working there. The most important reasons for <u>choosing Germany</u> as a destination country were named as contact with relatives already there, respect for human rights, and the welfare system. The listed <u>reasons</u> for Ukrainians choosing the Czech Republic as their destinations include the

large Ukrainian diaspora present in the country before the Russo-Ukrainian war, the dynamic economy with the lowest unemployment rate in the EU, and the significant solidarity with refugees.

Gender and age

In terms of gender and age, the demographics of Ukrainian refugees [differ substantially](#) from those of the Ukrainian population before the war. This is largely due to the fact that at the beginning of the war, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy ordered a [mass mobilisation](#), prohibiting men of fighting age from leaving. Thus, the [gender distribution](#) amongst Ukrainian refugees is at least partially due to the fact that men of Ukrainian nationality between 18 and 60 years of age are currently prohibited from leaving the country. Indeed, [UN Women data](#) suggests that of those who have fled the country, 90 percent are women and children. As such, one can conclude that refugees from Ukraine are ['self-selected'](#), a term used to describe refugees who are more likely to choose to leave or to have the opportunities to do so.

It should be noted that not all countries who host refugees from Ukraine have published data on refugees' age and gender. The existing studies also vary in terms of how much demographic detail is provided. One must also recognise that statistics on Ukrainian refugees are subject to constant change, given the ongoing status of the Russo-Ukrainian War. Furthermore, more information from other host countries would be required to provide general statistics.

Additionally, a consistent study approach would be beneficial. Current surveys conducted in individual countries may involve different methodologies which makes comparisons between countries more challenging. Given the different approaches to studies, the results within a single country may involve some variation. When considering the results of the studies, one must also take into account the potential risk of bias. For example, surveys advertised online are subject to [self-selection bias](#). Nonetheless, several studies provide useful insights into the age and gender proportions in refugee host countries.

As there is a [high number of refugees](#) in Poland and Germany, they have been subjects of several studies. A 2022 study of [Ukrainian refugees in **Poland**](#) exploring their age and gender indicates that women make up nearly 90 percent of all adult refugees, with the largest group of refugees being people aged 30-44. The same [study](#) reveals that most refugees came to Poland with others, primarily their own children or children of other people. The number of refugees arriving alone was reported as just 24 percent.

Another [online study](#) inspects the data from refugees from Ukraine who had relocated to **Germany and Poland**. Participants for the online survey were recruited by using targeted ads on Facebook and Instagram in the second half of April 2022. [Preliminary findings](#) from the survey

suggested that 88 percent of respondents were female. Only 23 percent of respondents left Ukraine alone, with more than three-quarters having left with family or friends they had already known before leaving Ukraine. In addition, in six out of ten cases, respondents left Ukraine with children under the age of 18.

Media Service Integration (Mediendienst Integration) 2023 statistics on Ukrainian refugees in **Germany** also indicate gender imbalance in adult refugees, although it is not as prominent as in aforementioned studies. Namely, statistical data indicates that around 69 percent are women and 30 percent are men. Over 33% of registered refugees from Ukraine were children and young people under the age of 18. Most of them are at primary school age (6-11 years).

Similar trends can be observed in the results of a 2022 overview of Ukrainian refugees in **Austria and Poland**, which reveals that a disproportionate number of refugees were young to middle-aged females or children. Between April and June 2022, two large surveys were conducted simultaneously in Kraków (Poland) and Vienna (Austria). The data were collected at numerous locations in Kraków and at Vienna's official arrival center where Ukrainian refugees gather to register, arrange documents, or receive help. The data from Poland suggest that 95 percent of refugees were women, 4 percent were men, while 1 percent had not identified their gender, with most of the respondents having moved to Poland with children below 18. 78 percent of survey participants reported having children, with the largest number of children aged 6-10 years. The highest number of adults surveyed were in the 36-40 age category, with the second most common being those aged 31-35.

The results from Austria of the same survey reveal that 89 percent of survey participants were women. The most common age category was 35-39 years, with the second most common category being 30-34 years. Individuals had on average 1.1 children. One-third of respondents were childless, while 2 percent of respondents were expecting mothers. Therefore, survey results from both Austria and Poland show similar demographic patterns.

A survey conducted in June 2022 by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of **the Czech Republic** suggested that 44 percent of new refugees from Ukraine were women, 20 percent were men, and 36 percent were children. Three quarters of adult Ukrainian refugees were younger than 45 years old, and 28% were younger than 30 years old. Among Ukrainian refugee families in the Czech Republic, the most common type was a mother with one child.

Similar trends emerge in statistics produced by UN Women in March 2022 with data on the demographic profiles of Ukrainian refugees hosted by **the Republic of Moldova**. The data indicate that 80 percent of refugees are adult women (18+), with 1 in 2 women aged 25-44. In addition, there were 48,000 child refugees under the age of 18, which represents 46 percent of all refugees residing in the country. Among all children, 40 percent were aged 0-6 years. Girls

account for 49 percent among the youngest children (below 11 years) and up to 53 percent among the teenagers.

Demographic data from **Latvia** (as per August 2022) suggest that among Ukrainian refugees, 46 percent were women, 22 percent were men, while 32 percent were children, out of whom 11.3 percent were children of pre-school age, while 23.1 percent were aged 7-17 years. Data from Latvia's neighbouring state **Lithuania** (as per October 2022) show that 66 percent of registered refugees are female, while 34 percent are male. It should, however, be noted that children are included in this gender balance, which differentiates the data from Lithuania from other countries. Out of the total Ukrainian registered refugee population in Lithuania, thirty-six percent were children below 18, 59 percent were adults in their working age (18-64 years old), while 5 percent were older than 64 years.

Finally, the third Baltic country, **Estonia**, had 41 percent female Ukrainian refugees, 31 percent male refugees, while 28 percent of refugees were children under the age of 18, with the majority of children being in the 0-5-year age category (as per September 2022 data). The relatively high percentage of male refugees can be partly explained by the fact that Estonia has received Ukrainian men who have escaped from Russia after their initial forced deportations.

While the results from the country case studies cannot be extrapolated to all host countries of Ukrainian refugees, the majority of refugees in all aforementioned countries were women and children under the age of 18. Statistical data would benefit from better age breakdown, with some countries (e.g., the Czech Republic) categorising all children in the same "under 18" category. Nonetheless, existing data on age and gender confirm the effect of prohibition in Ukraine for men aged 18-60 to leave the country and illustrate the need for host countries to focus on potential challenges experienced by specific demographic groups.

Education and socioeconomic background

Evidence on Ukrainian refugees' socioeconomic profiles is still limited. A possible reason for relatively low rates of registration is that in most countries, refugees from Ukraine receive financial support and have the right to work without prior registration at the public employment services. In the absence of large-scale administrative data, a number of surveys conducted in individual countries provide valuable insights into refugees' educational and professional backgrounds. It must be noted, however, that these surveys are not always representative and can paint a biased picture. In addition, educational and professional qualifications are generally based on self-reports and may not be entirely accurate. As such, these potential biases should be considered when interpreting results from individual countries.

Nonetheless, assessment of the socioeconomic profiles of new arrivals provides an indication of their skill potentials and chances of integrating into the labour market. According to OECD, despite limited data, it appears that Ukrainian refugees are more highly educated than other refugee groups, as well as more highly educated than the general Ukrainian population. The organisation reports that refugees from Ukraine do not fit the typical profile of refugees, having a relatively high percentage of tertiary education, which should improve their employment prospects. Indeed, a survey conducted by the EUAA and the OECD shows that 71 percent of Ukrainian refugees self-declare being tertiary educated, with most holding a Master's degree. There were only 8 percent of respondents who had not completed more than secondary school.

In terms of Ukrainian refugees' past employment, OECS reports that a variety of surveys (e.g., UNHCR's intentions survey and the OECD-EUAA survey) indicate that a large number of refugees have experience in employment or entrepreneurship. In particular, according to the OECD-EUAA survey, 77 percent of respondents were employed before fleeing, while UNHCR reports that out of their sample of Ukrainian refugees, 76 percent declared that they were employed before they left Ukraine. Although some uncertainty exists regarding previous employment levels of refugees, since these are generally self-reported, activity levels seem to be above the average for Ukraine. In particular, at the beginning of the war, 58 percent of the total population aged 15 to 70 was employed.

In addition, OECD assumes that although there is still much uncertainty about the length of refugee stays, refugees will gradually seek employment in greater numbers. A shortage of workers in many host countries provides good conditions for refugees to integrate into the labour market, especially given the high formal education levels and past job experience of Ukrainian refugees, but much depends on the accompanying support measures. More than 5 million Ukrainians have sought refuge in the European Union, where 3.7 million have applied for a special program allowing them to work, attend school, and access healthcare across the bloc. EU officials have unveiled a version of an online initiative aimed at matching skilled Ukrainian workers with job vacancies. Thus, the refugee crisis has led to some refugees taking up jobs that were previously hard to fill in Europe's labour market. In recent years, Europe has experienced a labour shortage as a result of decades of low birth rates and companies' increasing demand for advanced skills. The integration of refugees might help tackle the issue.

One of the countries showing such trends is **Germany**. A December 2022 poll of 11,225 refugees carried out jointly by several bodies in Germany indicates that Ukrainian refugees in Germany tended to be better educated than the average Ukrainian, with 72 percent having a university degree. However, the inclusion of refugees in the German labour market has had its challenges. The number of Ukrainians seeking employment in Germany is currently around 350,000, but many of them are struggling to find work.

A [study](#) by the Munich-based economics research institute IFO published in June 2022 found that 90 percent of Ukrainian refugees would like to find work in Germany, but only half have been able to do so. While there is an acute [shortage of skilled workers](#) in multiple industries in Germany, with over 900,000 job vacancies as per June 2022 data, the lack of German language skills is adversely affecting Ukrainians' chances of getting employment, with the knowledge of German not being common among Ukrainian refugees. This might also encourage skilled workers to seek [low-skilled occupations](#). Another problematic aspect is the inability to promise long-term commitment, with [German HR managers expressing concern](#) that refugees from Ukraine may soon wish to return to their home country.

Consequently, the example of Germany illustrates the importance of supporting the linguistic integration of refugees from Ukraine. Indeed, as [reported by UNHCR](#), adults with language proficiency have more opportunities for professional advancement. Provided the lack of skilled workers in Germany, language training can be mutually beneficial. Nonetheless, the Ukrainian refugee population tends to have a fairly high level of [English proficiency](#). For example, according to the UK Humanitarian Response Insight [Survey](#) conducted in April 2022, about a third of Ukrainians who arrived under Ukraine Humanitarian Schemes speak English well or very well. Provided that significant numbers of Ukrainian refugees in other host countries have good knowledge of English, it might help them acquire jobs where the use of English is common.

Similar opportunities and challenges as ones in Germany also occur in **Poland**. Although Ukrainian and Polish [share a similar linguistic background](#), fluency in Polish takes time and effort. Consequently, some Ukrainians with high levels of formal education are forced to initially [take up low-skilled employment](#). However, Ukrainians are welcomed in Poland given its [aging population and labour shortage](#), which are common across the EU. Provided this, with $3.4 billion in government funds and $2.1 billion from private sources, a significant portion of the [money has been invested](#) into Polish language classes for Ukrainians and childcare for refugees' children. The latter is particularly important in refugee host countries, given the high numbers of young [female refugees with children](#).

[Business groups and researchers in Poland](#) estimate that 20 percent to 50 percent of Ukrainian refugees may remain after the war, with the predicted number potentially reaching 1 million people. This could have a positive effect on the Polish labour market, given that 59 percent of Ukrainians who immigrated to Poland had [higher or incomplete higher education](#), as per December 2022 data.

The situation in Poland's neighbouring country, **Lithuania**, is similar. Almost half (49 percent) of [refugees declared](#) to have achieved tertiary education, with another 29 percent having completed upper secondary education or vocational training. As per September 2022 [data](#), 34

percent of refugees from Ukraine residing in Lithuania had found employment. However, evidence from Lithuania also shows the crucial role of language training for those seeking employment, with 34 percent of Ukrainian refugees reporting having language as a barrier.

The labour market situation of Ukrainian refugees is also encouraging in **the United Kingdom**. The UK Humanitarian Response Insight Survey indicates that the employment rate of those who entered the country under the Ukraine Humanitarian Schemes reached 42 percent in August for those who arrived in March/April and 56 percent in November for those who arrived by June (as per 2022 data). As such, while challenges exist, the countries hosting Ukrainian refugees have evidently made progress with their integration in the job market.

In Summary

Evidence indicates that Ukraine has experienced a highly selective migration to Europe, with the UN estimating that 90 percent of refugees from Ukraine are women and children. This can be explained by the fact that Ukraine's martial law prohibited men aged 18-60 from leaving the country after 24 February 2022. Indeed, separate country case studies from countries like Germany, Poland, and the Czech Republic among others suggest that the majority of refugees are young women and children. This evidence illustrates the need to make educational institutions accessible to children from Ukraine. In addition, childcare provision is important to assist young female refugees with finding employment.

According to the OECD, Ukrainian refugees are more likely to integrate than other refugees due to their educational profile, past work experience, and immediate access to employment. In addition, Ukrainian refugees could help tackle existing shortages in host country labour markets which are particularly prominent in Europe. However, the lack of knowledge of host country languages can adversely affect refugees' ability to find employment.
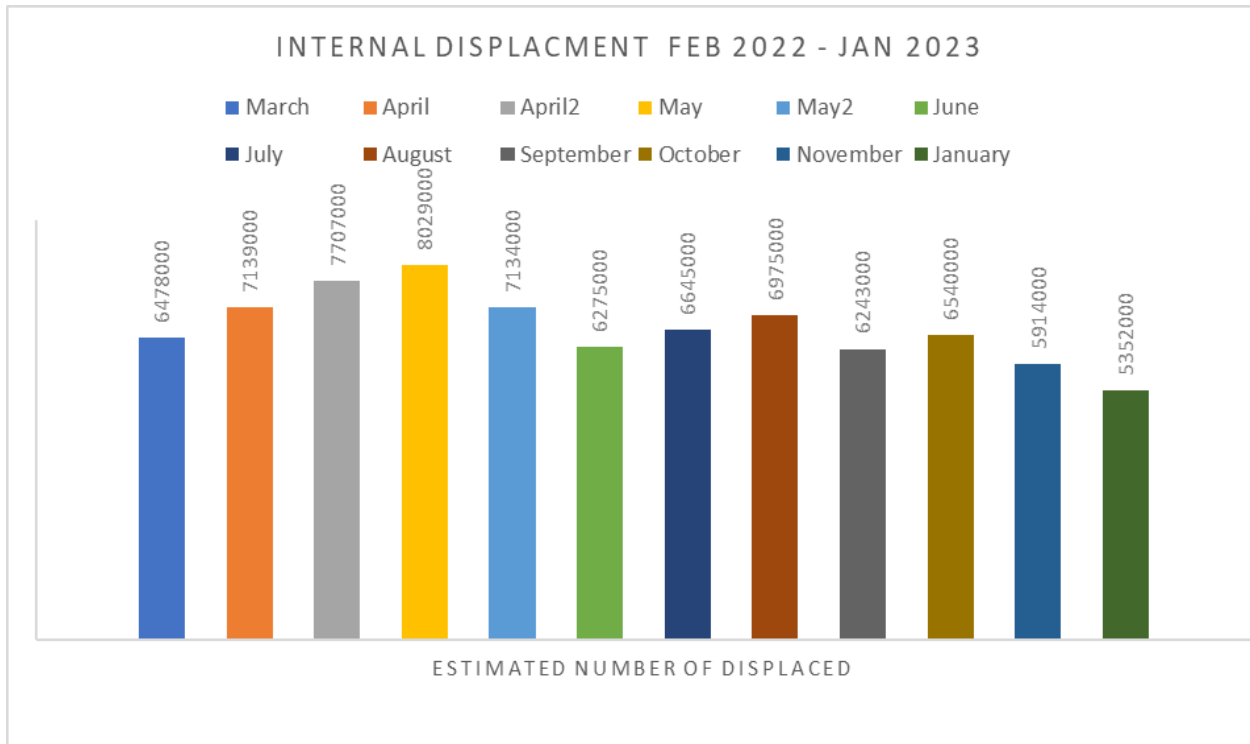
Besides providing mainstream labour market integration support, host countries should also implement targeted measures that address the specific needs and challenges of refugees. However, more statistical information, representative samples, and high-quality data from all refugee host countries are necessary as individual country-level data cannot be extrapolated to all refugee communities.

Internal Displacement in Ukraine

GorStra Research Group Analyst Leanne Curran

Data for this section covers the period February 24th 2022 to January 23rd 2023.

The Russian invasion of February 2022 caused significant internal displacement within Ukraine with estimates suggesting that between 6.5 million and 8 million people have been forced to relocate internally over the past twelve months. The most recent International Organisation for Migration (IOM) report estimates the current displacement figure to be 5.4 million, with 58% of all Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) being displaced for six months or more. The below graph shows the IOM's estimated number of IDPs over the course of the conflict so far:

INTERNAL DISPLACMENT FEB 2022 - JAN 2023

Legend: ■ March ■ April ■ April2 ■ May ■ May2 ■ June ■ July ■ August ■ September ■ October ■ November ■ January

Values: 6478000, 7139000, 7707000, 8029000, 7134000, 6275000, 6645000, 6975000, 6243000, 6540000, 5914000, 5352000
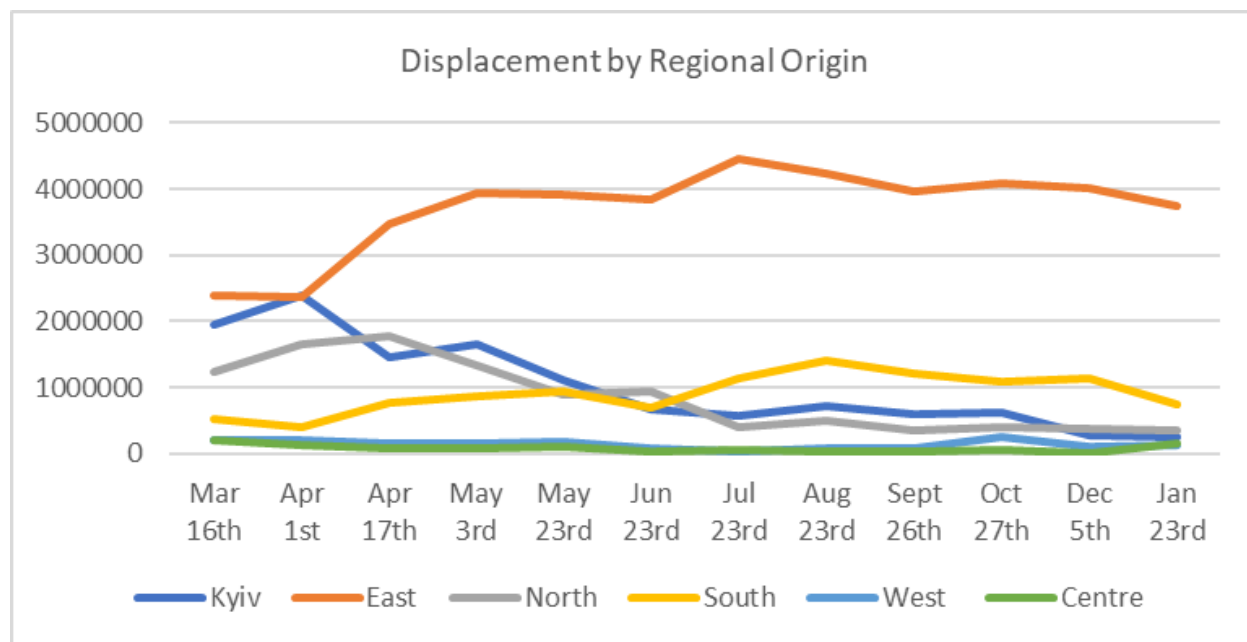
ESTIMATED NUMBER OF DISPLACED

Source: International Migration Organisation (IOM) Ukraine Internal Displacement Report. Round 12, January 2023

Internal displacement has occurred both in anticipation of, and in response to military activity, consequently migration routes and behaviours have changed tactics have shifted. Looking at data at a regional and oblast level enables us to see changes in the patterns of displacement, but also where displacement has become concentrated.

Regional Displacement

Considering internal displacement at the regional level provides a macro level view of both where IDPs come from, and where they end up. Unsurprisingly, the data show that the regions with the largest number of Russian troops in them are the largest source of IDPs.
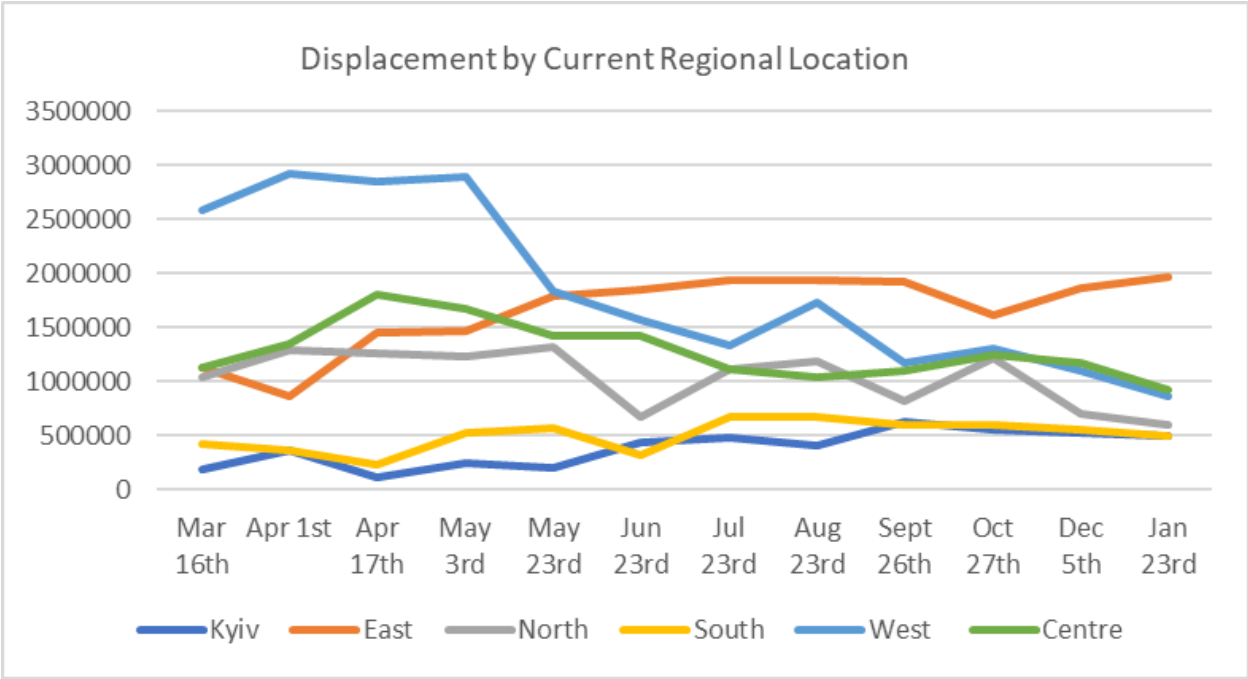

Source: International Migration Organisation (IOM) Ukraine Internal Displacement Report. Round 12, January 2023

The majority of initial displacement occurred from the capital, Kyiv, the East and the North in response to advancing Russian troops. As the Ukrainian military began to regain territory around Kyiv and in the north from April, a clear decrease in IDPs from these two regions occurs and is maintained. Displacement in the East is consistently high and increases as direct combat intensifies in this region from April onwards. After counter-offensives are launched in the summer the east becomes the epicentre of displacement in Ukraine. Damage to infrastructure and the chaos of close conflict make it difficult for many to leave the region entirely. After September numbers begin to plateau as Russian troops begin to retreat across the Dnieper River, and winter makes it harder for troops to move. Displacement in the South is initially slow, but increases after Kherson and Mariupol are captured. The siege of Mariupol trapped many in the city and they were subject to aerial bombardment. Humanitarian corridors initially only provided passage to Russia and Belarus, and a ceasefire for a corridor opened to Ukraine was not observed by Russian forces. For those in the South staying and leaving were both dangerous. As in the east, a secondary spike occurs with the summer counter-offensive as Ukrainian troops advance on occupied territories. Displacement from the west and centre of Ukraine is much lower in comparison with the rest of the country, reflecting the lower level of threat from advancing Russian troops. These regions are still subject to aerial bombardment which damages critical

infrastructure and residential buildings, adding to the humanitarian crisis in other regions. The capital Kyiv is geographically located in the centre of Ukraine, but due to its military and political significance the IOM provides its data separately to the region. It experiences a spike in IDPs at the onset of the conflict, but this decreases fairly consistently as the months go on. The Russian retreat eastwards in April meant occupation of the capital was no longer an imminent threat, and repeated aerial bombardments have failed to produce another exodus from Kyiv.

Comparing IDP by origin with IDP by current location shows the shift in migration behaviours. We can clearly see that more Ukrainians are being displaced in their region of origin as the conflict progresses:

Source: International Migration Organisation (IOM) Ukraine Internal Displacement Report. Round 12, January 2023

Initially the highest concentration of IDPs is found in the West. This reflects both the migration route of those seeking to leave Ukraine, but also those who sought relative safety within it. As the conflict progresses the number of IDPs in the west drops and Ukrainians are increasingly displaced either in their home regions, or as close as possible. Some choose to return to their home regions when it becomes clear that the conflict will be long term. Others hope to return once the situation stabilises or the immediate threat to life passes, so remain as close as they can. Displacement's psychological impact has to be constantly weighed against the conflict's physical threat. Displacement by location is highest in the East, corresponding with its position as the biggest source of IDPs by origin. The South has the most consistent level of IDPs from July onwards, but appears to be tapering off unlike the East. The west sees a rise in IDPs until April, whereupon it begins to decrease reflecting the emerging pattern of remaining displaced in

regions of origin. The North, Centre, and West experience peaks and troughs reflecting the multiple displacements that many Ukrainians have experienced as the conflict has developed. All three are key to the migration routes taken by those most affected by combat fighting and occupation by Russian troops.

Oblast Displacement

The IOM provides estimates for the top five oblasts for both origin and current location of IDPs in twelve rounds of surveys taken from March 2022 to January 2023. This shows the pattern of displacement at a micro level, and provides us with insights as to which oblasts have borne the brunt of displacement. It also better illustrates the migration routes taken by IDPs. Below is data taken from six rounds of surveys:

ROUND 2: 1st April 2022

Oblast by IDP Origin	IDP %	Oblast by IDP Location	IDP %
Kyiv City	33%	Kyiv	9%
Kharkiv	18%	Lviv	9%
Kyiv	15%	Poltava	8%
Donetsk	8%	Zarkarpattya	7%
Chernihiv	4%	Zhytomyr	7%

Source: International Migration Organisation (IOM) Ukraine Internal Displacement Report. Round 2.

Initially most internal displacement occurs from the capital and surrounding oblast as people react to troops movements on the Northern border with Russia and Belarus. The low number from Chernihiv, north of Kyiv and on the Belarusian border is indicative of how unprepared Ukrainians were for invasion. The lack of any Southern oblasts reinforces this as they are immediately invaded from the Black Sea and occupied Crimea, and many in these oblasts did have time to leave. Kharkiv, which shares a border with both Russia and occupied Donbas sees the next highest level of displacement. The occupation of the Donbas since 2014 has to be taken into consideration when analysing migration from Luhansk and Donetsk. Just prior to the invasion Russia acknowledged the independence of the occupied territories, which could have contributed to the rise in residents leaving Donetsk as well. The location of IDPs is largely in the

Centre and West, at this point in the conflict many are still trying to leave the country or believe that it will soon end.

The IOM report from this round shows that 52% were not considering further movement from their current location, compared to 30% who intended to move again. In the West, 44% of the displaced intended to move further, but in other regions the number was far lower. This suggests that decisions on whether to leave the country or somehow stay within it were made early in the conflict.

ROUND 4: 3rd May 2022

Oblast by IDP Origin	IDP %	Oblast by IDP Location	IDP %
Kharkiv	23%	Kyiv	9%
Kyiv City	20%	Lviv	9%
Donetsk	17%	Dnipropetrovsk	8%
Kyiv	12%	Khmelnytskyi	8%
Mykolaiv	5%	Vinnytsia	7%

Source: International Migration Organisation (IOM) Ukraine Internal Displacement Report. Round 4.

As the conflict enters its third month IDPs from Mykolaiv increase and Dnipropetrovsk appears as a location for the displaced as the fighting and bombardment in the South and East intensifies. Both are located in the South, and additionally Dnipropetrovsk shares a border with Kharkiv and Donetsk in the East. It is the most direct route by road to a place of comparative safety for residents fleeing fighting or occupation in Mykolaiv, [Kherson](#) and [Mariupol](#) (South) and [Kharkiv](#), [Donetsk, and Luhansk](#) (East). Kharkiv is a centre of conflict as Ukrainian troops begin to retake settlements. Kyiv, and Kyiv City remain high producers of IDPs, but the number located there remains steady.

May sees the highest estimated number of IDPs at over 8 million, and an estimated 2,715,000 Ukrainians have returned by this point according to the IOM. Inevitably some will have added to the total number of displaced. The share of IDPs considering further movement from their current location also increased during this time to 44% (vs 30%) with 41% saying no (vs 52%) which is likely due to this. The key shift here is that people are opting to be displaced within

Ukraine or their home regions, and 26% were hoping to return home in the next two weeks. Only Lviv shares a border with a potential host/safe country. Khmelnytskyi (West) and Vinnytsia (Centre) share a border, but Vinnytsia shares one with Odesa in the South and is close to Mykolaiv. Although this migration route is not as direct as to Dnipropetrovsk, it is a viable route to take. The perception remains that the West and Centre are the safest locations for both those that have stayed and those that return.

ROUND 6: 23rd June 2022

Oblast by IDP Origin	IDP %	Oblast by IDP Location	IDP %
Donetsk	21%	Dnipropetrovsk	16%
Kharkiv	21 %	Poltava	9%
Kyiv City	11 %	Kharkiv	9%
Kyiv	10 %	Kyiv City	7%
Luhansk	9 %	Kyiv	6%

Source: International Migration Organisation (IOM) Ukraine Internal Displacement Report. Round 6.

The summer counter-offensives in the South and East begin to influence migration patterns more as the conflict nears six months. All three oblasts in the East feature, with Donetsk and Kharkiv producing 42% of all IDPs. All five of the oblasts ranked by location are linked with the top five ranked by origin by proximity. Kharkiv is subject to renewed aerial bombardment forcing IDPs West and South. A combination of Ukrainian troops beginning to advance toward Kherson and Russian advancements in Donetsk and Luhansk drive up the numbers of displaced people located in Dnipropetrovsk.

This survey by the IOM shows an overall decrease in further mobility of IDPs to 34% (vs 44%) with 51% intending to remain where they are, but it also shows a decrease in the number of IDPs who intend return home in the next few week (15% vs 26%). Among those most likely to return home are residents of Kyiv and the Northern oblasts which reflects the move to a South-Eastern front.

ROUND 8: 23rd August 2022

Oblast by IDP Origin	IDP %	Oblast by IDP Location	IDP %
Donetsk	21%	Dnipropetrovsk	10%
Kharkiv	21%	Kyiv	10%
Kyiv City	10%	Kharkiv	9%
Mykolaiv	10%	Zaporizhzhia	6%
Zaporizhzhia	8%	Lviv	6%

Source: International Migration Organisation (IOM) Ukraine Internal Displacement Report. Round 6.

The South-Eastern counter offensive now dominates migration patterns and routes. Direct combat fighting and missile strikes around Kherson, Donetsk, Luhansk and Kharkiv continue to be the main driver of IDP numbers. However, Zaporizhzhia's displaced are largely contained within the oblast partially because it becomes as it is occupied. Mykolaiv sees an increase as Russian troop presence increases in Kherson, but Dnipropetrovsk does not see a corresponding rise in the number of IDPs it hosts. Lviv in the West does see an increase as missile strikes are launched across the entire country, however a repeat of the large-scale moves to the West at the beginning of the conflict does not happen.

The IOM survey shows the number of those intending to move further on is lower than in July (29% vs 34%), and an estimated six million are believed to have returned either to Ukraine itself or to their home region/oblast by the summer. IDPs are largely restricted or restrictive in their movements after months of conflicts, resigned to the conditions or unable to leave due to them

ROUND 10: 27th October 2022

Oblast by IDP Origin	IDP %	Oblast by IDP Location	IDP %
Donetsk	23%	Dnipropetrovsk	13%

Kharkiv	21%	Kyiv	12%
Zaporizhzhia	11%	Kyiv City	9%
Kyiv City	10%	Poltava	8%
Kherson	8%	Kharkiv	7%

Source: International Migration Organisation (IOM) Ukraine Internal Displacement Report. Round 10.

The increase in attacks on Zaporizhzhia, the liberation of Kherson, the beginning of a counter offensive in Kharkiv, and advancements in Luhansk and Donetsk see an increase in IDPs located in Kyiv and Poltava, as well as Dnipropetrovsk. A series of missile strikes across the country after an explosion on the Crimean bridge, results in an increase in IDPs from the capital, but not from any other oblasts in the West or Centre.

The IOM survey shows another drop in the number of IDPs intending further movement, down to 27%, but 29% of IDPs from the South who intended to move on stated that they did not intend to return, along with 27% from Kyiv. The destruction of Ukraine's infrastructure has become so vast that many do not see how they can go home.

ROUND 12: 23rd January 2023

Oblast by IDP Origin	IDP %	Oblast by IDP Location	IDP %
Kharkiv	27%	Dnipropetrovsk	15%
Donetsk	19%	Kharkiv	14%
Zaporizhzhia	13%	Kyiv City	9%
Kherson	10%	Kyiv	8%
Luhansk	8%	Odessa	7%

Source: International Migration Organisation (IOM) Ukraine Internal Displacement Report. Round 12.

Migration patterns by January reflect two different causes of displacement in Ukraine; Fighting and liberation. Ukrainian troops liberated Kherson in November and an increase in IDPs occurred. The destruction of residential buildings, and energy, water and sanitation infrastructures in liberated oblasts means many leave as soon as they are liberated. Increases in Odesa and Dnipropetrovsk show where they go. Kharkiv remains a high producer and host of IDPs. This is not only due to its proximity to Donetsk and Luhansk, but to the destruction of its settlements. Its liberation does not result in an increase in Kharkiv, but an increase in Kyiv oblast reflecting movements East to West. Fighting in the Donbas continues to produce IDPs, and as they are liberated this number is likely to continue due to the conditions left behind.

This IOM survey continues the pattern seen in Round 8 with relocation rather than return being considered by IDPs in the North and South. In the East the majority intend to remain in their current location as the South East front remains active. Kyiv has seen the largest increase in those who wish to remain for the foreseeable future.

The below maps demonstrate the change in internal migration patterns from February 2022 to January 2023. In the first map, the collated data shows clear movement towards the west of the country as people either seek to leave the country, or to find relative safety in its western or central regions. The origin of IDPs is spread among the East, North and Central regions facing the most immediate threat of occupation in the initial months of the conflict.

INTERNALLY DISPLACED PEOPLE
IN UKRAINE, BY OBLAST, DURING THE MONTH OF APRIL 2022

Top 5 oblasts with the largest share of IDP, either originating or arriving

33% Share of IDP (nation wide) originating from the oblast

9 % Share of IDP (nation wide) arriving in the oblast

Source : International Migration Organisation (IOM) Ukraine Internal Displacement Report, Round 2   Realisation : Perrin Remonté, GORSTRA Research Group

The second map shows the increased numbers of IDPs electing to remain as close as possible to their home region as the conflict has become entrenched in the East. Kharkiv's unique position as a top producer and host of IDPs shows the variation in Ukranians perceptions of safety and risk.

The data for both maps only reflects the top five oblasts producing or hosting IDPs, but they provide a useful overview of changes in migration behaviours. This in turn provides a useful insight into changing Ukrainian attitudes to displacement. The cost-benefit analysis of displacement changes as impact of infrastructure damage, countrywide missile strikes, the psychological and physical trauma of conflict and economic needs have to be taken into account.

IDP shelters and aid

In response to the unfolding humanitarian crisis many ordinary Ukrainians established informal volunteer organisations to provide accommodation, food, and other basic necessities in the aftermath of the invasion. In May 2022, a review by Humanitarian Outcomes revealed for the first six weeks all aid came from grassroot or national organisations, and that those groups remained the primary source of aid three months later. This impressive response was an unsustainable situation, but while funding has increased to facilitate aid Ukrainian organisations remain the ones delivering it. Sources of conflict emerged as International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) began partnering with Ukrainian Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). The CSO's have made calls for localisation and greater cooperation, but a New Humanitarian report in February 2023 shows that frontline grassroots NGOs are continuing to struggle to acquire resources despite partnering with INGOs.

The reality for most IDPs at the beginning of the conflict was a choice between living in collective shelters established in public buildings, moving in with friends or family, moving at cost, or sheltering in basements or air raid shelters nearby. The UN has since established accommodation centres through its Office of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), but a situation report from February 2023 revealed that many of these centres were not equipped for long-term accommodation or the winter, and could only house 500,000 IDPs. Additionally, most of the assistance was provided in western Ukraine, far from where it is needed. Most IDPs remain sheltering in damaged or inferior homes with some receiving emergency support by OCHA such as blankets and tools to repair damage. Food and livelihood assistance has been a greater success in the East for OCHA but need remains high across the country. The International Red Cross has provided relief through its Ukrainian chapter and volunteers, but for the most part grassroots and informal responses remain key to the humanitarian response to IDPs. Much of the aid is delivered to Ukraine's border or to western Ukraine, before Ukrainian volunteers take on the burden and risk of distributing it.

External displacements
GorStra Analyst Pauline Lecomte

The conflict in Ukraine started [Europe's largest refugee crisis since the second world war](). Flows of people fleeing war crossed Ukraine's land and air borders to seek refuge across Europe and further. Civilian casualties and destruction of civilian infrastructures caused massive departures even during the very early stages of the conflict. One million Ukrainians had already left their homeland [after the first week following the Russian invasion]() on February 24, 2022, and numbers have continuously increased since then.

Numbers show that Ukrainian refugees fled to three main regions: Europe, Russia, and North America.

At least five millions people migrated to European countries, according to a [ReliefWeb report]() published in January 2023. Every European country welcomed refugees. Poland, Germany and Czech Republic received the largest flow of refugees with respectively one million, 1,6 millions and 476,000 refugees each.

Italy (173,000), Spain (159,000), the United Kingdom (151,000), France (119,000), Romania (107,000), Slovakia (104,000) and Moldova (102,000) received more than 100,000 refugees each.

Austria (91,000), the Netherlands (85,000), Switzerland (77,000) Lithuania (72,000), Belgium (66,000), Estonia (65,000), Ireland (59,000), Portugal (56,000) and Sweden (50,000) welcomed between 50,000 and 100,000 refugees each.

Most Ukrainians travelled by land and crossed land borders. Neighbouring countries of Ukraine all received large amounts of refugees with the exception of Belarus (18,000) and Hungary (33,000). This can be explained by the political connections between Belarus and Russia which makes Belarus rather unattractive to Ukrainian refugees. Different statements from the Hungarian government announced they had taken between [600 000]() and [1,3 million]() refugees, however figures from the UNHCR show [much less significant numbers]().

Central Europe and Nordic and Baltic countries all received a significant portion of the flow of refugees. Balkan countries received comparatively fewer refugees, although relatively proportionate to their demography.

The European Union implemented a [Temporary Protection Directive]() to grant temporary protection to all Ukrainian residents who fled Ukraine from February 24 2022. The directive states that eligible people must receive access to the labour market and a temporary residence permit in all EU Member States. The temporary protection is valid until March 4 2023, but is to

be extended if necessary. Equally, lighter rules on Ukrainians right to move freely across Europe and easy -sometimes free- to transportation was decided by European authorities.

According to the UNHCR, almost 2,9 million people left from Ukraine to the Russian Federation. There have been allegations of people being massively abducted to Russia by the Russian military. The UNHCR has deemed some of these allegations credible, however large flows of refugees from the attacked state towards the aggressor country are a regular phenomenon, according to migration scholars.

Canada and the United States have both welcomed large amounts of refugees since the beginning of the war. Canada has recorded more than 150,000 asylum seekers. In November 2022, the US had received 85,000 refugees from Ukraine and a national sponsoring campaign is ongoing to welcome more.

Since the beginning of the conflict, European countries have been welcoming and accommodating to Ukrainian refugees. In some countries, they have been said to have even boosted the local economy. In Poland, refugees are expected to significantly contribute to the economic growth through taxes. In other countries however, refugees are said to have become a "society burden" . The Baltic countries have reported economic and social difficulties in welcoming Ukrainian refugees. Chauvinist arguments have been made against their presence in Baltic countries, even though they could play a positive part in the local economy in the long run.

The exact number of refugees who fled from Ukraine is yet to be determined. While some have already returned to Ukraine, thousands are still expected to leave the country as long as violence continues. Ukrainian refugees are settling in their country of arrival. A German government-backed study showed that 37 percent of Ukrainian refugees wanted to settle in the country, at least for a few years. Previous humanitarian crises, such as the civil war in Syria, demonstrated that, as long as the violence is ongoing, it is very unlikely that refugees would return home. The war in Ukraine may have a long-term impact on European demographics.

Effect on Host Countries

London Politica Analyst Emma Dondero

As of February 7th of this year, just under one full year since Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022, there are over [8 million](#) recorded Ukrainian refugees living across Europe. Neighbouring Poland has taken in the bulk of the refugees, currently housing over 1.5 million Ukrainians and having seen over 9 million border crossings over the Polish-Ukrainian border last year alone. Other [top recipient](#) countries are Germany (880,000+), the Czech Republic (450,000+), Spain (160,000+), and Italy (160,000+).

Of those 8 million, almost 5 million refugees are [nationally registered](#) under the EU's temporary protection measure (or a "similar national protection scheme" outside of the EU). With 3.5 million refugees fleeing Ukraine in the [first month alone](#), the EU quickly responded to the crisis by issuing a ["Temporary Protection Directive"](#) (TPD) that granted Ukrainian nationals (as well as their partners and children) a one year stay in their respective recipient countries if they had resided in Ukraine before or on February 24th. Also included are third party nationals residing in Ukraine at the start of the war, provided that they had legal residency permits and can demonstrate proof that they are unable to return to their countries of origin. While it depends on the specific member state that ultimately receives the refugee, the protected stay [should include](#): residency permits, full access to the labour market, access to education systems for children (and in some cases, college-aged young adults), choice of recipient country and a degree of freedom of movement within the EU, and access to healthcare. As a key component of the directive, the often long and complicated process of applying for asylum in the EU is significantly [paired down](#), offering much easier processes and astonishingly faster wait times. Given that the war is still ongoing, it is likely that the directive will be renewed in March 2023. This was the first time in the EU's history that the directive was issued, drawing [praise](#) for its speedy support of Ukrainian refugees and [criticism](#) due to the group's lack of political willpower to issue a similar directive years earlier for the Syrian refugee crisis, as the EU has had the ability to use the tool [since 2001](#).

As top refugee recipients, Poland, the Czech Republic, and Germany have been notably supportive of the Ukrainian refugees that have come their way, on a federal level as well as on an individual, volunteer level. In Poland, an estimated 77% of Polish citizens [contributed](#) towards the cause in some way, whether it be housing refugees in their own home for months or offering other types of financial or service-based support. Given their shared past with the USSR, Poland and the Czech Republic's support (and to an extent, Hungary's, Slovakia's, and Romania's) can certainly be put in context of having a shared "enemy" in Russia; in the New York Times, one Polish migration researcher [stated](#), "if the Ukrainians were not fighting Russia in their country, we might now be fighting Russia for our own country."

Still, despite popular support and shared ties, the longevity of the situation has begun to weigh heavily on some EU member states as the war and refugee crisis moves into its second year. With inflation at 18%, Polish citizens have had to pull back a degree of financial support out of personal budget constraints. Border countries like Poland and Hungary have faced "fatigue" as thousands of Ukrainians continue to flow across the country everyday, and as much of the refugee support comes from the efforts of individual volunteers with differing degrees of government support. In Germany, cities and towns outside of Berlin have complained that, while the funds may be there, federal authorities have not adequately allocated their generous refugee budget towards the places that have grown to need it most; large influxes of migrants have affected everything from healthcare availability to childcare options to housing shortages in the nation's more overwhelmed areas. Ireland - which has taken in so many refugees that they now constitute a whopping 1% of its population - is facing a severe housing shortage for both incoming refugees and for its own citizens, who are experiencing record numbers of homelessness. While refugees have the possibility to bring positive effects to local economies and populations, through revitalising the workforce and boosting tax revenue, this is contingent on their integration into local communities - which has struggled in part due to the fact that basic needs, such as housing and language classes, have not been fully met due to resource constraints.

Russia, in turn, seems eager to exploit and exacerbate these potential points of contention; Russia's recent bombing and subsequent destruction of 40% of Ukraine's power grid has been viewed by some experts as a strategic move to trigger a second wave of migrants towards bordering countries beginning to struggle with upkeep and budgetary constraints. Across the EU and wider Europe, groups that have, in the past, sought to spread disinformation and/or far right-wing ideology have attempted to weaponize high inflation and cost of living crises present across Europe, and pin local issues on refugees (seen in Ireland, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Estonia, and Switzerland to name a few). A portion of the disinformation is thought to be on the part of Russia in order to undermine the EU as part of its strategy to win the war. As of November 2022, there have been two incidents of arson for refugee accommodations in Germany, and another similar arson incident in Ireland with a possible (but yet unconfirmed) similar political motivation. In both the Czech Republic and Poland, groups have formed and protests have taken place with anti-Ukrainian refugee messaging and far-right populist rhetoric. While anti-Ukrainian refugee sentiment is cropping up along the political periphery in Europe, it is so far contained within a vocal minority.

While it does not look like right-wing, anti-refugee groups will take hold of European popular politics in the coming months, and while popular support of Ukrainian refugees remains, financial strains and the ongoing cost of living crisis will begin to form a larger part of the conversation on Ukrainian refugees. As of March 2023, Poland has announced that Ukrainian refugees, previously covered in full by the Polish government, will be requested to pay 50% of their housing and accommodation costs if they have already been living in Poland for 120 days.

After an additional 180 days, that 50% is upped to a 75% payment of costs on the part of the refugee (provided they are not pregnant, nor disabled). Poland will also be requiring additional filings and reducing preferential access for Ukrainian refugees intending to stay past August 2023. Germany and the Czech Republic have both stated that they have reached capacity for the amount of refugees they can receive. Some Latvian cities have run out of aid money, and Hungary and Romania have also had to make adjustments to previously generous aid packages. Responsibility sharing discussions may begin to take place with more fervency, as some EU member states (such as France) have taken in very low numbers of refugees compared to others.

Discrimination

The EU's past responses to previous refugee and/or migrant crises stand in stark comparison to the EU's response to the Ukrainian refugee crisis. Whereby the 2014-2016 Syrian refugee influx caused a tightening of EU migration policy, and whereby the EU's restriction of safe migration routes have pushed refugees into unsafe ones, Ukrainian refugees have been able to move with relative ease and without the added violence of smugglers and border police that other Middle Eastern and African refugees have often experienced from fleeing conflicts in their own countries. Most major EU recipient countries have generally averaged over a year of wait time for asylum recognition, while the temporary protection order allows for "near-automatic" recognition along with higher percentages of recognition acceptance. In a discussion about the EU's past backlogs, a spokesperson for Amnesty International working in Spain stated, "there has never been the slightest political will on the part of any European country to comply with its international obligations towards refugees" and that the speedy protocols put in place were a good demonstration of what the EU is capable of when it comes to refugee protections. Furthermore, stemming from the EU's previous lack of political will and history of active pushbacks, the physical and bureaucratic infrastructure needed to support refugees and migrants was sorely lacking in February 2022 at the start of the war, and has continued to heavily inform its available resources and capacity today.

During the Syrian refugee crisis, the EU refused to pass through the same temporary protection measure that is in place today. Poland and Hungary actively sought to shut down measures that would require them to shoulder a portion of the protection responsibility in 2015, even after they were unable to successfully petition the European Court of Justice. In mid-2022, while accepting millions of Ukrainian refugees, Poland finished a border wall it began after the 2021 Poland-Belarus border crisis, whereby the two countries violently pushed back Middle Eastern migrants to the other party. In late 2022, the Czech Republic extended border controls due to an influx of Syrian migrants, and pushed back over 5,000 people. Hungary, which has opened its borders during the current crisis, denied migrants food in 2018 - stating that they have no legal obligation to do so (despite its international obligation via human rights treaties and international law); the country admittedly has not shown great material support for Ukrainian refugees, but

has [performed better](#) in the past due to the pressure and investment on the part of the EU. Studies [have shown](#) that French officials are more likely to reject the asylum applications of Muslim candidates. Italy and Greece have each found ways to criminalise humanitarian efforts for individual actors assisting migrants in life or death situations. The list continues, but, by and large, the EU as a bloc and its individual member states have had a remarkably differing response when comparing past to present. Xenophobia has played a large role in the differing responses, with Ukrainians' shared [language and religious](#) background often discussed as a motivating factor for the EU's support and with Middle Eastern and North African refugees often [painted](#) as "dangerous" and "jihadist terrorists".

There are some key differences to note between pre-existing legal frameworks and agreements that do factor into the different outcomes; for example, stemming from a pre-war agreement, Ukrainian nationals are allowed to enter the EU for up to 90 days visa-free. Therefore, for Ukrainian nationals, free border movement into the EU was not questioned once the migration started. However, putting aside easier border crossings, the TPD has effectively created [two levels of treatment](#) for asylum seekers in the EU, one level for those refugees covered by the temporary protection directive and another level for those who are not. As Ukrainian refugees are pushed to the front of the line, Middle Eastern and African refugees are subject to longer wait times and months of sleeping on the street while their applications lie in limbo or while governments scramble for resources. In one survey of 300 non-Ukrainian refugees who had fled Ukraine, 40% reported they had not been able to receive temporary protection. Some have stated that there is a possible legal basis that differing access to protections can be proven as [discriminatory](#) under international law.

The Visa Process
London Politica Analyst Kristijonas Sokas

Ukrainians in Lithuania

For those Ukrainians that hold a biometric passport, there is a visa free ninety day period of stay in the EU and Schengen zone upon arrival. Lithuania being in the EU means Ukrainian citizens do not need a visa to arrive in Lithuania or any other EU country and stay there for ninety days. Citizens of Ukraine who do not have a biometric passport are also entitled for the ninety days period of stay however for that and in order to obtain residence permit, they need to register with the authorities. For Ukranians that [do not have a passport](#) at all, they are required to (In Lithuania) register with the authorities and request and obtain temporary residence permit for humanitarian needs.

[In Lithuania](#), Ukrainian citizens wishing to stay in the country are urged to register with the authorities. After registration, a national visa for one year, and a residence permit for one year are issued.

In order to [work in Lithuania,](#) Ukrainian citizens with biometric passports are allowed to work in the country straight away without any registration procedures. If a Ukrainian citizen does not have a biometric passport then the individual is asked to register with authorities and then a national visa and a residence permit may be issued, giving them a permission to work and rent as well as access to certain national benefits.
Temporary residence permits for one year and national visas will be extended upon expiration after the Ukrainian individual applies for [extension](#).

[Overall](#), residence permits since the 1st of March 2022, Lithuania has announced an easier way of obtaining temporary residence permits for Ukrainian citizens as well as humanitarian visas of class D.

Refugees from Middle East in Lithuania:

In May 2021 a large number of illegal migrants from the Balkans and Middle East started crossing the Belarus-Lithuania border unexpectedly. Even though a lot of people were running away from the areas that were affected by the war such as Syria, Afghanistan or Iraq, Iran, Lithuanian border guard "VSAT" has been tasked by the government to capture the migrants that crossed the border illegally and them to be placed in quickly erected refugee camps of maximum security and later on in refugee centers that were set up quickly and were heavily guarded as well. Later on the government has chosen to employ the ["push back"](#) tactic in order to prevent any migrant from entering the country. More than ten thousand migrants have been prevented from crossing the border.

Out of more than [4000 detained](#) illegal migrants in Lithuania, only 190 remained, the rest left Lithuania for Western Europe after Lithuania was legally required to release them from the detention centers, showing that neither of them were aiming for asylum in Lithuania even though many have filed asylum requests in the country, almost none of these requests have been granted.

Forced Deportation

London Politica Analyst Lāsma Kokina

Since starting its full-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 24 2022, the Russian military and its proxies have committed [countless war crimes](#) and crimes against humanity. Russia has offered a variety of [reasons](#) for invading Ukraine and continuing to wage war against it. There are severalclearly false allegations among them, including that Russia is saving people from the Ukrainian government, which the Russian government falsely [claims](#) is controlled by Nazis aiming to eradicate the country's Russian-speaking population. Thus, under the guise of evacuations, Russian forces are [transferring Ukrainian civilians](#) from areas of active hostilities to areas under Russian occupation in Ukraine and the Russian Federation. This is a grave violation of the laws of war and a possible [crime against humanity](#).

In July 2022, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky [reported](#) that two million Ukrainian citizens, including hundreds of thousands of children, have been forcibly removed from Ukraine. Despite the fact that it remains unclear exactly how many Ukrainian civilians were transferred to Russia since the beginning of the [Russo-Ukrainian War](#) - either voluntarily or involuntarily - many were transported in [organised mass transfers](#) to Russia, even though they were hoping to go to Ukrainian-controlled territory. Officials from Russia and Russia-affiliated organisations provided transportation to Russia and told some civilians that they had no choice but to remain in Russian-occupied areas or go to Russia.

A process referred to by Russia as "filtration," a [compulsory security screening](#), was applied to thousands of these Ukrainian citizens by Russian and Russia-affiliated authorities. The government typically collected civilians' biometric data, including fingerprints, facial images from the front and the side, conducted body searches, searched personal belongings and phones, and questioned people about their political views. As Ukrainian civilians waited for this process, many [reported](#) living in cramped and filthy conditions for periods as long as a month. In these [operations](#), Russia aimed to identify individuals deemed insufficiently compliant or compatible with its control. The U.N. Human Rights Office has [verified](#) that pro-Ukrainian individuals were subjected to arbitrary detention, torture, ill-treatment and forced disappearance and were transferred to penal colonies. There are [reports](#) that some individuals targeted for filtration were summarily executed.

Deportees were also forced to sign, and witnessed other people signing, documents stating they had witnessed [war crimes](#) committed by Ukrainian forces. Additionally, Amnesty International [reported](#) that some forced [deportees were subjected](#) to violence, including electrocution, beatings, and threats of execution. Other [documented cases](#) include unlawful confinement and inhuman treatment.

In addition, [reports indicate](#) that Russian authorities are deliberately separating Ukrainian children from their parents and abducting others from orphanages before putting them up for adoption. As such, it comes as no surprise that Russian President Vladimir Putin issued a [new decree](#) in May 2022 that made it easy and quick to adopt Ukrainian children, which was nearly impossible before the war. Additionally, Russian [officials announced](#) extending government support to Russian families adopting Ukrainian children; with the biggest financial incentive provided to those willing to adopt handicapped children.

According to [Ukrainian officials](#), thousands of Ukrainian children have been evacuated without their parents' consent. Although [Russian officials](#) don't deny that Ukrainian children are now in Russia, they insist they are part of a humanitarian project for abandoned, war-traumatised orphans, and they have been surprisingly public in their social media messaging. However, the number of children or their locations are not revealed.

The Conflict Observatory [reports](#) that there are at least 6,000 children relocated from Ukraine to Russian-occupied Crimea and mainland Russia's re-education facilities. A total of 43 facilities have been identified as [holding children from Ukraine](#) since Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022. Many are recreational camps where children are supposedly on vacation, while others are facilities where foster children or children for adoption are housed. Most camps have engaged in pro-Russian [reeducation efforts](#), and some have provided military training to children or suspended their return to their parents. Russian Federation-endorsed camps advertise themselves as "integration programs", with the goal of integrating Ukrainian children into the Russian government's cultural, historical, and societal vision.

All levels of government are involved in these operations, coordinated centrally by the Russian government. A number of federal, regional, and local figures have been [identified](#) by the Yale Human Research Lab as being directly involved in operating and justifying the program on a political level. Officials allegedly [involved in the operation](#) coordinated logistics (i.e., transporting children), raised funds, collected supplies, and promoted the program within Russia and the occupied territories.

While prominent government officials from the [U.K.](#) and the [U.S.](#) have condemned forced deportations of Ukrainians, the situation is unlikely to improve. Despite the fact unlawful transfers and deportations of protected persons constitute war crimes and violations of the [Fourth Geneva Convention](#), Russia is making sure it is ready for a new wave of forced deportations. In January 2023, Ukraine's deputy prime minister Iryna Vereshchuk [reported](#) that Russia allegedly plans to deport Ukrainian citizens en masse from the Kherson region to Russia due to fears that Russian forces may [lose further territory](#) in Ukraine. Indeed, in December 2022, Moscow

allocated €2.5 billion in extra spending for 'possible resettlement' of Kherson regional residents to Russia under a [government order](#) issued by the Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin.