

Enduring hardships: Ukrainian refugees' realities in Moldova and Poland two years on

Comparative analysis of the situation of refugees from Ukraine in Moldova and Poland.

April 2024



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Written by: Noor Lekkerkerker (Upinion), Noëlle van Glabbeek (Upinion), Aleksandra Minkiewicz (NRC Poland), Michèle Carezis (NRC Moldova)

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Norwegian Refugee Council
Prinsens gate 2
N-0152 Oslo
Norway

www.nrc.no

Cover photo: Beate Simarud/NRC

Tatjana, 38, and her son Miron, 12, fled Dnipro in Ukraine and moved to Warsaw. Warsaw, Poland, 13 September 2022.

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1 Executive Summary

This executive summary lays out the main findings of the recent study, together with recommendations for key stakeholders

Two years after the escalation of the war in Ukraine, the initial solidarity for hosting refugees from Ukraine in the Republic of Moldova (Moldova) and the Republic of Poland (Poland) has become strained, as host populations face challenges around inflation and access to essential services. A recent study commissioned by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) in Poland and Moldova presents a challenging account of refugees from Ukraine who are contending with ongoing trauma, family separation, and daily struggles to make ends meet. The findings and recommendations for Ukraine were published in a separate report titled '[Destruction and Displacement in Ukraine: The Cost to Civilians Two Years On](#)', published by NRC in February 2024.

Since the escalation of the war in 2022, Poland¹ and Moldova² have been at the forefront of receiving refugees fleeing Ukraine - more than 6 million refugees from Ukraine are recorded in Europe³, the largest single displacement in the region since the Second World War. The support extended to refugees from Ukraine in both Poland and Moldova has been considerable - including the provision of the temporary protection, the inclusion of refugees into the national social protection system, and the support offered by the host communities and authorities. Moreover, INGOs continue to work closely with local organisations to deliver emergency assistance and to support the medium-term integration needs of refugees for whom return prospects remain slim.

Summary of Key Findings

The majority of people who fled Ukraine are women, children, and elderly. For 57% of the respondents in Poland and 48% in Moldova, it has been over 18 months since they left behind their homes, lives, family, and friends.

¹ The projected population of refugees from Ukraine in Poland by the end of 2024, including third-country nationals (TCNs), is 1.1 million, some 150,000 more than the number of active PESEL-UKR numbers. Source: 2024 Regional Refugee Response Plan - Poland Chapter.

² Since February 2022, as stated in the Refugee Response Plan for Ukraine 2024, 997,092 Ukrainians have crossed the border of Moldova. Until December 2023, approximately 115,000 refugees from Ukraine were still in the country, representing around 4 per cent of the total population.

³ Last updated 15 February 2024 - Source: UNHCR collation of statistics made available by the authorities.

Despite 58% of respondents in Poland mentioning employment as a main source of income, 80% of them expressed that their income source was only just sufficient to meet basic needs or that they were unable to meet basic needs at all.

The situation is even more challenging for the elderly whose main source of income is their pension from Ukraine, which is insufficient to cover their basic costs of living in Poland⁴.

In Moldova, 71% of respondents reported that their primary source of income was assistance from humanitarian agencies. In 2023, most respondents relied on savings, but in the 2024 survey, the dependence on savings decreased significantly, whilst it remains as the main source of income for 29% of respondents. This indicates a worrying trend as Ukrainian refugees in Moldova run out of savings and are increasingly reliant on humanitarian support to meet their basic needs. This is a particularly concerning finding against a backdrop where the humanitarian funding in Moldova is on the decline.

Respondents in Poland also mentioned having insufficient income to sustain themselves and their households (41%) and not being able to live in their temporary accommodation anymore (30%) as reasons for why they plan to return to Ukraine in the short term. Respondents also expressed concerns about their legal status in Poland and the prospect of being forced to return (55%).

In Moldova, 37% of respondents reported being unable to meet their basic needs. This limitation is cited as the primary reason for 38% of respondents expressing a desire to return to Ukraine.

Respondents in Moldova and Poland also answered questions regarding their living situation and access to services inside Ukraine before they left the country:

- 31% of respondents in Poland and 24 % in Moldova reported that their house or place of residence in Ukraine was destroyed as a result of shelling, artillery fire, missiles, UXOs, or other hostile acts.
- 94% of them reported they were unable to access any helpful services in Ukraine following the escalation of the war.

The uncertainty about movements and the future was expressed by 43% of respondents in Moldova and 44% in Poland, while 27% of respondents in Moldova and 29% in Poland expressed plans to return to Ukraine at some point. After two years, 30% of respondents in Moldova stated an intention to stay in the host country, while in Poland, only 18% of the respondents intended to stay in the country.

⁴ [NRC Poland Equality vs. Equity. How complementary approaches are required to support vulnerable Ukrainian refugees, November 2022, page 7](#)

Recommendations

NRC's presence since 2022 has demonstrated that there is a role for international non-government organisations (INGOs), including NRC, in Poland and Moldova to support civil society and local authorities with the expertise and capacity required to meet the needs of the massive influx of refugees. Moreover, INGOs bring funding to the response that local organisations may not be eligible for.

To address the needs of refugees from Ukraine across Poland and Moldova, the international community and member states must undertake several actions to fulfil their obligations under the International Humanitarian Law and guarantee the protection of all civilians in periods of prolonged displacement.

The neighbouring countries must be supported to continue welcoming and hosting people fleeing Ukraine.

- The governments of Moldova and Poland, in coordination with civil society and humanitarian organisations, should guarantee timely and needs-based humanitarian assistance that addresses the acute needs of most vulnerable refugees and the new arrivals yet to be covered by the Temporary Protection scheme, including shelter, food, water, healthcare and psychosocial support.
- Host governments need to increase their efforts to fund civil society actors to prevent the most vulnerable refugees from falling between the cracks of current state-provided social and legal protection systems.
- National and local humanitarian actors are the ones at the frontline of the response. They need to have access to long-term, direct funding streams and support from the international community to sustain their programmes.
- Funding provided through the Regional Refugee Response Plan and directly to civil society actors should be predictable and multi-year to ensure vulnerable populations do not slide deeper into humanitarian needs as the crisis becomes protracted.
- Livelihood support programmes, including skills training, vocational education, and entrepreneurship programmes implemented by I/NGOs and local authorities, need to be strengthened by additional funding streams to enhance economic opportunities, resilience, and integration for refugees in host countries.

2 Methodology

Using Upinion's digital engagement platform, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) gathered insights directly from individuals in Poland, Moldova and Ukraine to inform programming in Ukraine and in the neighbouring countries. The study covered various topics, including displacement trends, the impact of prolonged displacement on coping mechanisms, resilience levels, and mental health.

Findings and recommendations for Ukraine were published in a separate report titled 'Destruction and Displacement in Ukraine: The Cost to Civilians Two Years On', published by NRC in February 2024.⁵

This report presents the results of data analysis for the neighbouring countries, offering insights into displacement and refugee movements in Poland and Moldova. It includes a comparative analysis between different population groups. Where relevant, a brief comparative analysis is provided with the results of the Hidden Hardship Report⁶ written by NRC and Upinion on the same topic a year ago, highlighting the changes and trends observed one year later.

Upinion's platform

Upinion has developed a digital engagement platform that allows it to securely connect and stay in touch with marginalised and hard-to-reach people in crisis and displacement-affected contexts. Since 2020, Upinion has engaged with crisis-affected communities in over 20 countries and languages, discussing topics related to their needs, priorities, recommendations, and prospects. Upinion uses a two-way communication approach that allows it to engage with people on a longitudinal basis and to send tailored information to respondents about relevant services or initiatives in their area, thereby turning the conversations into an information exchange.

Onboarding respondents

To ensure broad and diverse outreach while addressing methodological challenges, Upinion implemented a recruitment approach combining online outreach via Facebook⁷ and WhatsApp with offline efforts involving local teams from NRC, its partners, and Upinion's own network.

⁵ [Destruction and Displacement in Ukraine](#): The Cost to Civilians Two Years On, February 2024

⁶ [Hidden Hardship](#): 1 Year Living in Forced Displacement for Refugees from Ukraine, February 2023

⁷ The Facebook ads were targeted to respondents above the age of 18, living in different regions of Poland and Moldova. The texts were adapted based on preferences and interests of respondents.

Target group

Upinion and NRC reached out to Ukrainian refugees residing in Poland and Moldova since 24 February 2022 via online and offline outreach.

The sample sizes in each of the target countries are large enough to draw general conclusions from when considering a margin of error of 5% and a confidence level of 95%.⁸ A combination of random and targeted sampling (corresponding with online and offline outreach) is used, which also contributes to reducing sample bias.

However, the difficulty in including men in the target countries despite outreach efforts and the focus of the targeted outreach on elderly people have skewed the samples when compared to national population statistics, rendering extrapolation to the entire Ukrainian population challenging.

In the demographics section it is indicated which characteristics of our sample resemble the actual population and hence which are likely indicative of wider trends.

Where possible, findings have also been compared with last year's research engagement with refugees from Ukraine in Poland and Moldova by NRC and Upinion, or with other large-scale assessments, to compare trends and assess validity, or why certain deviations could be the case.

The conversation

The data collection took place from the 5th of January until the 4th of February 2024, and comprised 20-45 questions, varying based on the participants' experiences and their previous responses. The main themes covered were movements related to displacement and return, the underlying reasons for these movements, impact of the war on experiences and access to services, livelihoods, basic needs, feelings of safety, and future plans. The conversation was available in Ukrainian and Russian languages.

It is important to note that when sensitive subjects were being discussed, explanations or messages were provided to the respondents to acknowledge the sensitivity of the question, to underscore that the question was asked to better understand their situation, and to remind them that they had the option to skip the question if they felt uncomfortable.

At the end of the conversation, each respondent would automatically see a number of information messages regarding services and NGOs in their area.

Data analysis

After the data collection period, the data were cleaned and subsequently analysed employing quantitative and qualitative methods. Cross tabulations and disaggregation by variables including age, gender, location, and state of displacement are consistently conducted, but only mentioned in the report when a

⁸ www.qualtrics.com/blog/calculating-sample-size/.

relevant result was yielded. Percentage differences larger than 10% are deemed noteworthy when comparing different subsets of the sample. Questions answered by less than 20 respondents are generally not incorporated in the findings.

It is important to note that the "n-values" mentioned throughout the report always refer to the total number of respondents who answered the specific question. Therefore, this "n-value" varies throughout the report, depending on the subgroup of individuals responding to a question and being affected by the drop-out of respondents towards the end of the conversation.

Where applicable, data findings are compared with trends discerned after Upinion's engagement with 875 refugees from Ukraine in Poland and 309 in Moldova in early 2023.⁹ It should be noted that the samples of this, and the current data collection round do not comprise the same individuals.

Data limitations and challenges

The methodology employed in this study has inherent limitations that must be considered when interpreting the findings presented in this report.

First, as Upinion operates as a digital platform, it lacks the nuanced advantages of face-to-face interviews, particularly in providing in-depth explanations for questions and ensuring limited drop-out. Consequently, certain sensitive topics may not be addressed extensively, and participants may not receive the same level of 'aftercare' that could be provided in traditional interview settings. To address this limitation, Upinion has shared fact-checked information from organisations offering services, including psychosocial assistance resources.

Additionally, this methodology relies on self-reporting, which introduces potential biases. To address this concern, control questions were incorporated to identify participants likely to complete the survey randomly, and efforts were made to eliminate double data entries. The sample is also limited to people being able to read and write, who have internet access, and who obtain a Facebook account.

⁹ [Hidden Hardship](#): 1 Year Living in Forced Displacement for Refugees from Ukraine, February 2023

3 Respondents - Demographic information

949 respondents started the conversation, of whom **766 completed the entire conversation**. This completion rate of 81% is considered on the high side with regard to research and outreach. In this report, all respondents, including those who did not fully complete it, are taken into consideration in the analysis given that their answers are still valid.

Poland

Gender

In Poland, the sample comprised **18%** men and **81%** women (n=551), resulting in a gender ratio of 1: 2.3. **1%** of participants identified as 'non-binary' or preferred not to answer the question. In terms of representativeness, there is a gender imbalance as Poland's refugee population comprises 63% women and girls¹⁰, and the sample at 81% is overrepresenting women. Hence, the findings on the overall sample of Poland cannot be extrapolated to the wider population directly.

Age

Most respondents (**82%**, n=551) fall within the age range of 36 to 69, distributed among the subcategories of 36-45 (**25%**), 46-59 (**37%**), and 60-69 (**21%**). A smaller proportion belonged to the age groups of 18 to 35 (**9%**), while those above 70 years old constituted **7%**. When examining the age distribution within the sample in contrast to the actual age distribution ranging from 18 to 60 and above among the Ukrainian refugee population in Poland, it becomes apparent that the younger demographic is underrepresented.¹¹ As a result, extrapolating the findings of the sample to the wide refugee population should be done cautiously.

However, the age distribution of female Ukrainian refugees in Poland shows that **76%** (n=439) fall within the age range of 18 to 59, with the remaining **24%** being aged 60 and above. Comparing these data with both available data by UNHCR as well as

¹⁰ See: <https://reliefweb.int/report/poland/ukraine-situation-regional-refugee-response-plan-january-december-2024-enro>

¹¹<https://reliefweb.int/report/poland/ukraine-situation-regional-refugee-response-plan-january-december-2024-enro>.

other sources¹², shows that the female population reached in Poland is indicative of the wider female Ukrainian refugee population in Poland. This is not true for the surveyed male Ukrainian refugee population in Poland, given its overrepresentation of elderly males - **44%** of the Upinion sample is aged 60 and above, versus 12% when looking at the actual population.¹³

Moldova

Gender

In Moldova the sample consisted of **17%** men and **80%** (n=398) women, resulting in a gender ratio of 1:2.2. A total of **3%** of respondents in Moldova identified as 'non-binary' or preferred not to answer the question. Compared to recent UNHCR data from Moldova¹⁴, the research sample is skewed towards women as **58%** of the actual refugee population in the country consists of women. Therefore, findings cannot directly be extrapolated to the wider population.

Age

The age distribution of the respondent sample in Moldova was slightly younger than Poland. The majority of respondents (**77%**, n=398) fell within the age range of 26 to 59, with nearly equal proportions distributed among the subcategories of 26-35 (**24%**), 36-45 (**30%**), and 46-59 (**23%**). A smaller group, comprising **12%**, was aged 60-69, followed by **6%** who indicated being older than 70. Only **2%** of respondents were between 18 and 25 years old.

The distribution in the reached sample corresponds with the actual age distribution of the Ukrainian refugee population in Moldova for both genders, within a margin of 15 %, rendering the Upinion sample indicative of wider trends.¹⁵ As not all relevant characteristics, including level of education, were included in the conversation to guarantee representativeness, caution is still needed to extrapolate findings of this report directly to the wider Ukrainian refugee population in Moldova.

¹² <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine/location/10781>; <https://reliefweb.int/report/poland/ukraine-situation-regional-refugee-response-plan-january-december-2024-enrobq>.

¹³ Ukraine Situation Regional Refugee Response Plan (January – December 2024), UNHCR January 2024

¹⁴ Ukraine Situation Regional Refugee Response Plan (January – December 2024), UNHCR January 2024

¹⁵ Ukraine Situation Regional Refugee Response Plan (January – December 2024), UNHCR January 2024

4 Data findings

Poland: Country analysis

Displacement patterns

When refugees from Ukraine in Poland were asked to indicate the duration of their displacement, the results highlight that the majority (**57%**, n=496) have been displaced for 18 to 24 months, with relatively more people older than 70 (**74%**, n=39) reporting this compared to younger age groups (around **56%**). Following this, nearly a quarter of respondents (**24%**) reported being displaced for 12 to 18 months, with smaller proportions reporting displacement for the past 6 to 12 months (**6%**) or 1 to 6 months (**7%**).

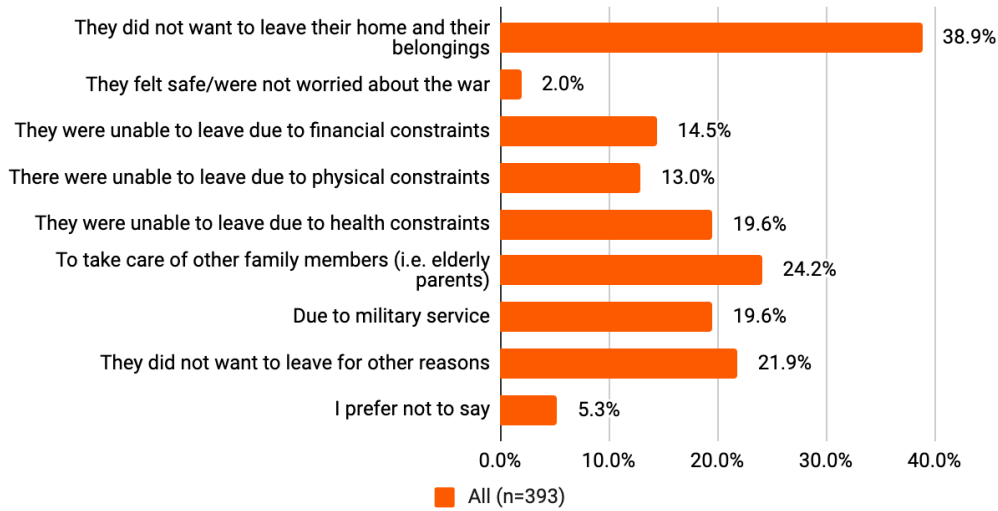
Family members left in Ukraine

A large majority of **80%** (n=495) stated they had family members remaining in Ukraine, with a higher proportion of females (**82%**, n=408) and people aged 18 to 59 (**84%**, n=345) reporting this compared to males (**70%**, n=84) and those aged above 60 (**70%**, n=145). A total of **19%** did not have any family members left in Ukraine, while **1%** preferred not to answer this question.

When asked for the reasons for which the family members decided to stay in the country, using a multiple answer format, the largest share (**39%**, n=393) reported their family members did not want to leave their home and belongings. Notable is that more female respondents (**41%**, n=331) mentioned this as a reason compared to male respondents (**27%**, n=59). A variety of other reasons were also provided, including caretaking responsibilities for other family members (**24%**), the inability to leave due to health constraints (**20%**), or due to military service (**20%**).

Only a negligible number (**2%**) mentioned that they stayed behind because they felt safe. Furthermore, a significant proportion (**22%**) reported that their family members had other motivations for remaining, which we are unable to retrieve.

Figure 1. “What best describes their reasons for staying in Ukraine?” - multiple answers - respondents from Poland (n=393)

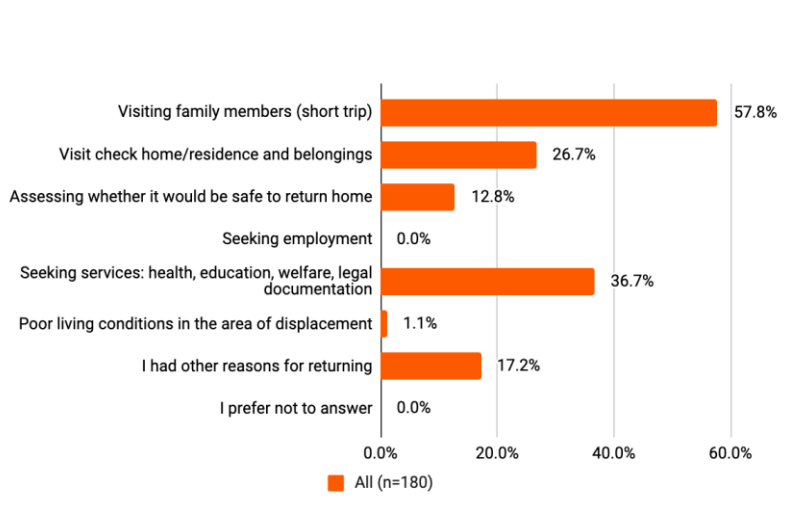


Return visits

When asked whether they had returned home (in Ukraine) for a visit since the refugee respondents had been displaced to Poland, **62%** (n=492) reported they had not yet returned for any period of time. Considerably more males (**79%**, n=84) had indicated this compared to females (**59%**, n=405). **37%** of the total number of refugee respondents in Poland mentioned they had been able to return, and **1%** preferred not to answer the question.

The primary reason for those who indicated to have returned was visiting family members (**58%**, n=180). This was followed by seeking (health/education/welfare/legal) services (**37%**) and visiting to check their previous residence and belongings (**27%**).

Figure 2. “What were your reasons for returning home?” - multiple answers - respondents from Poland (n=180).



Data disaggregation reveals that for individuals aged 18-59, the primary reason behind return visits was to visit family members and friends (**67%**, n=130), significantly more than individuals aged above 60 (**31%**, n=48). Conversely, individuals aged above 60 more frequently reported wanting to check on their home and belongings (**38%**).

Subsequently, respondents who had made a return visit were provided with a list of statements, from which they were asked to select the main reasons that best describe why they did not plan to stay in Ukraine after temporarily returning. Out of this list of statements, respondents predominantly selected they did not feel safe in their previous home area due to the war (**65%**, n=179) and the fact that their home area is still under heavy shelling or missile attacks (**28%**). Other reasons that were highlighted were that it is impossible to continue employment in their home area due to the war (**24%**), or that all their immediate family have left the area (**20%**).

Lack of access to government support (**4%**), humanitarian assistance (**2%**), or infrastructure and services (**7%**) was only mentioned by few respondents as a reason for not returning.

Important to note is that people aged 18 to 59 mentioned considerably more that they did not feel safe due to the war (**69%**, n=129) and, logically, that they were worried about military conscription (**10%**), compared to individuals aged above 60 (**52%** and **0%**, respectively).

The impact of war

Damage of housing or residencies

First, respondents were asked whether their house or residence in Ukraine has been damaged since 24 February 2022, as a result of shelling, artillery fire, missiles, UXOs,

or other aspects of the war. **31%** (n=466) reported 'Yes', while **62%** mentioned it was not. **6%** did not prefer to answer the question.

Those who reported their house or residence in Ukraine had been damaged, were followed-up on with the question whether they were able to access any helpful services in Ukraine after this happened. A large majority of **94%** (n=145) reported they were unable to, constituting **55%** who were unable to find available support and **39%** did not seek it. Only **5%** reported 'Yes', including **1%** mentioned which received services from the government and **4%** from humanitarian organisations.

Physical injuries

Additionally, respondents were asked whether they or their direct family members had been injured since 24 February 2022, as a result of UXOs, artillery fire, missile attacks, and shelling in Ukraine.

14% (n=464) reported 'Yes', with **12%** mentioning it injured a family member and **1%** indicating this affected themselves. **80%** mentioned they or their family members remained unharmed. **7%** preferred not to answer the question.

Those reporting 'Yes', were asked the following question: 'were you or your family members able to access healthcare services after the injury?'. **22%** (n=63) were unable to, despite seeking support. **16%** did not seek healthcare services, and **50%** were able to get support in health facilities or hospitals. A relatively large minority (**14%**) opted not to answer the question.

Loss of family members

When being asked whether the onset of the war since 24 February 2022 also resulted in a loss of an immediate or extended family member, **38%** (n=463) reported they had (**13%** an immediate family member and **25%** an extended one). The other **55%** of respondents did not experience this or choose not to answer the question (**9%**).

Of those going through this experience, the majority of **60%** (n=167) did not seek support, while **28%** could not find or access support, despite looking for it. More people aged above 60 mentioned they could not find, or access support (**38%**, n=29) compared to people aged 18 to 59 (**26%**, n=138). The latter group mentioned more that they did not seek support (**62%**), compared to older individuals (**52%**). Overall, small groups got support through healthcare providers (**4%**), or through humanitarian agencies (**4%**).

Livelihoods, feelings of safety, education, and humanitarian assistance

Sources of income

When questioned about their primary sources of income while outside Ukraine using a multiple-choice format, the majority of respondents (**58%**, n=487) mentioned employment. This was followed by a variety of sources, including social protection/pension from Ukraine (**23%**) mainly mentioned by people older than 60¹⁶, assistance from humanitarian agencies (**21%**), and savings (**20%**). **11%** mentioned they did not have any income source at all.

When comparing these findings to Upinion's conversation early 2023 with refugees from Ukraine in Poland, slightly fewer people's main source of income was work (49%, n=754 versus 58%, n=487 now), and more people relied on savings then (34%, versus 20% now).¹⁷

53% (n=485) expressed that their income source was only just sufficient to meet basic needs¹⁸. Subsequently, **27%** reported being unable to meet their basic needs at all. **18%** reported no issues meeting their basic needs, and **3%** of the respondents chose not to respond to this question.

Those who had indicated their main source of income as social protection in the form of a pension were asked if, at some point since February 2022, they had to return to work. Out of the respondents to this question, the majority (**57%**, n=134) mentioned they did not have to do this, while a considerable **41%** reported 'Yes.' Amongst the latter, relatively more men (**49%**, n=33) reported this compared to women (**39%**, n=101).

The main reason for returning to work indicated was the inability to support themselves or the household without working (**73%**, n=55). Following this, **26%** of respondents mentioned they wanted to go back to work, without presenting or clarifying the factors contributing to this. Very few respondents mentioned that they needed to return for work since their profession was needed to support the war effort (**2%**) or that they needed to help with repair and restrictions (**2%**).

Feelings of safety in Poland

Most of the respondents (**64%**, n=490) mentioned they feel safe most of the time in Poland, with a considerable proportion of people older than 60 (**76%**, n=144) reporting this, compared to the younger age groups (around **59%**, n=342). Overall, **32%** indicated they only sometimes feel safe. Only **3%** reported they do not feel safe at all. These findings echo those established through Upinion's engagement with refugees from Ukraine in Poland in early 2023.¹⁹

¹⁶ 78% (n=114) of people who mentioned social protection, in the form of pension, from the Ukrainian government as their main source of income are 60 years or older.

¹⁷ [Hidden Hardship](#): 1 Year Living in Forced Displacement for Refugees from Ukraine, February 2023

¹⁸ When asked to identify basic needs, multiple examples of basic needs were provided (such as food, water, clothing, shelter, sanitation) to enhance the respondents' understanding.

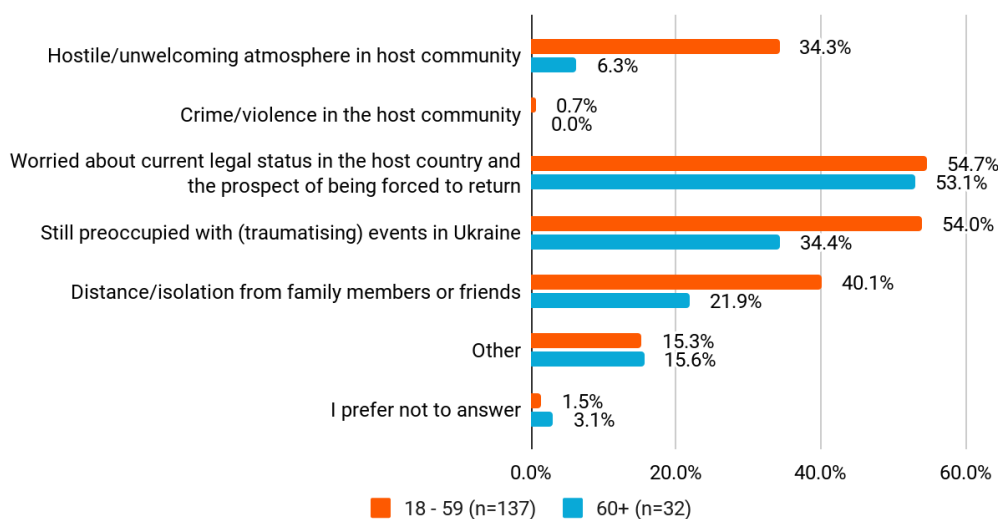
¹⁹ [Hidden Hardship](#): 1 Year Living in Forced Displacement for Refugees from Ukraine, February 2023

The main reason for feeling safe was mostly related to the stable situation in Poland (52%, n=314). However, employment opportunities (36%), the presence of friends and family (34%) and the welcoming and supporting atmosphere (32%) were also mentioned by respondents as reasons for them feeling safe. Employment opportunities (46%, n=203), along with educational opportunities (20%, n=203) were more likely prioritised by individuals aged 18 to 59, compared to older individuals (17% and 2%, respectively, n=109).

The main reasons for not or only somehow feeling safe mentioned are related to worries about the current legal status in Poland and the prospect of being forced to return (55%, n=170) as well as still being occupied with events happening in Ukraine (51%). While respondents also mentioned the distance and isolation from family members or friends (37%) and the hostile/unwelcoming atmosphere in the host community (29%) to play a role, crime and violence in the host community was mentioned as reason by very few (1%).

Data disaggregation highlights it is primarily those aged 18 to 59 (34%, n=137) that report the hostile and unwelcoming atmosphere in the host community as reason for not feeling safe, compared to those aged above 60 (6%, n=32). Additionally, younger individuals report more to still be preoccupied with the events that happened in Ukraine (54%) or to feel isolated from family or friends (40%), compared to older individuals (34% and 22%, respectively).

Figure 3. "Could you please select which of the statements best describes your reasons for not or only sometimes feeling safe?" - multiple answers - all respondents aged 18-59 (n=137) and aged above 60 (n=32).



Education

The respondents who indicated having school-aged children in their household were inquired about whether they attended school, remotely or in-person, while being outside of Ukraine. A total of 29% (n=342) indicated their school-aged children were

not attending any type of school. The majority of the school-aged children (88%) were attending school; either through in-person education in Poland (50%), or online education organised by a Ukrainian school (35%). 3% attended online education offered by a Polish school institution. These findings are in line with data collected by Upinion in early 2023.²⁰

The majority of respondents (65%, n=171) rated the quality of in-person schooling in Poland as good or very good (53% and 12%, respectively), whereas only 5% deemed it bad or very bad. A quarter of the respondents (26%) expressed a more neutral perspective (neither good nor bad).

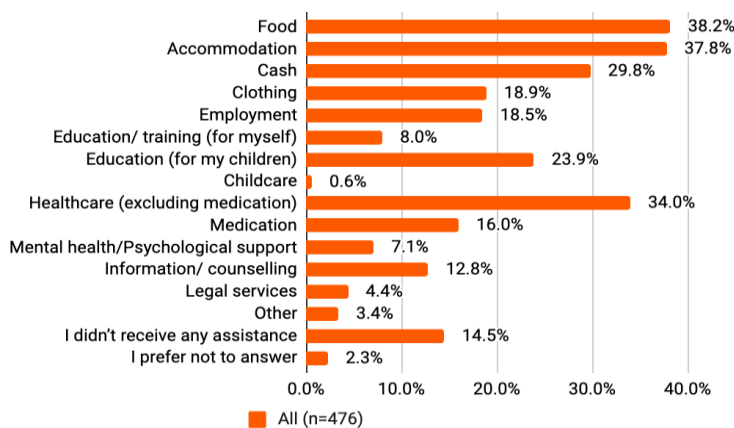
Regarding online schooling from Ukraine, a relatively higher proportion of individuals expressed a neutral opinion (41%, n=120), with a smaller group (40%) reporting it as good compared to those whose children attend in-person schooling in Poland. For online schooling in Ukraine, 11% rated it as bad or very bad, while 5% regarded it as very good.

Humanitarian assistance

After gaining insights on refugees' income and education, they were then questioned about the assistance they had received and still required.

Only 15% reported to not have received any assistance, with more people aged 18 to 59 (18%, n=334) reporting this compared to people aged above 60 (7%, n=138). Amongst those who received assistance, the type varied, with food (38%, n=476), accommodation (38%), healthcare (34%), cash assistance (30%) being mostly received by respondents. Less received seems to be educational opportunities for respondents themselves - and not their children - (8%), psychosocial support (7%), legal services (4%), and childcare support (1%).

Figure 4. “Have you **received** any of the following assistance while being in your current host country?” - multiple answers - all respondents (n=476).



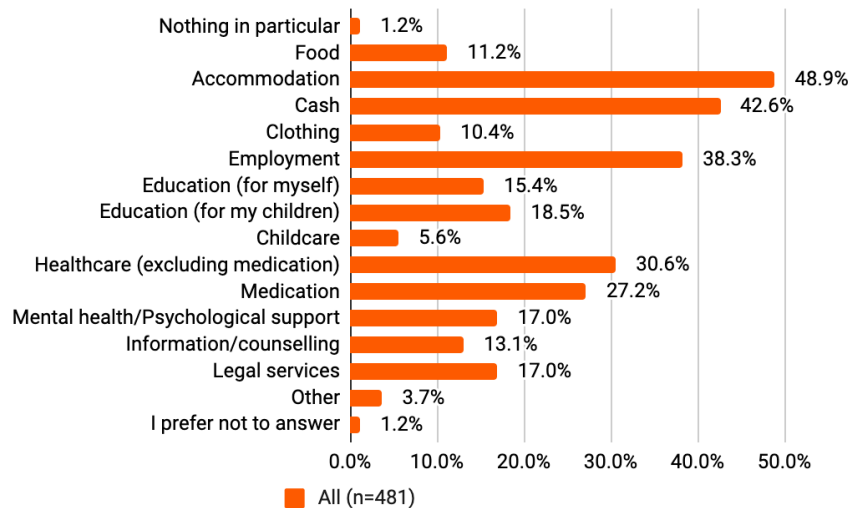
²⁰Hidden Hardship: 1 Year Living in Forced Displacement for Refugees from Ukraine, February 2023

The majority of 55% (n=391) mentioned that they had received this aid from government entities, followed by 43% who indicated support from international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) or United Nations (UN) agencies and 23% who were assisted by local civil society organisations and local NGOs. Individuals above 60 indicated considerably higher rates of receiving assistance from an NGO or UN agency (53%, n=122) compared to younger individuals in the 18 to 59 age group (37%, n=265). Overall, the role of private companies (4%) or employers (12%) seemed minimal in providing the above-mentioned support.

Interesting to note is that Upinion’s previous study in early 2023 showed that more refugees from Ukraine in Poland had received aid from international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) or United Nations (UN) agencies than government entities.²¹

To gauge what individuals still find helpful in their current situation, they were asked about what assistance would be helpful. Most respondents indicated they needed assistance regarding accommodation (49%, n=481) or in cash (43%), despite receiving assistance in or on these matters. A considerable group was also mentioned to be in need of employment (38%) as well as health care (31%) and medication (28%). Food (11%), clothing (10%), and childcare (6%) were not mentioned by many. Only 1% mentioned they do not need anything in particular.

Figure 5. "What assistance would have been helpful in your situation in Poland?" - multiple answers - all respondents (n=481)

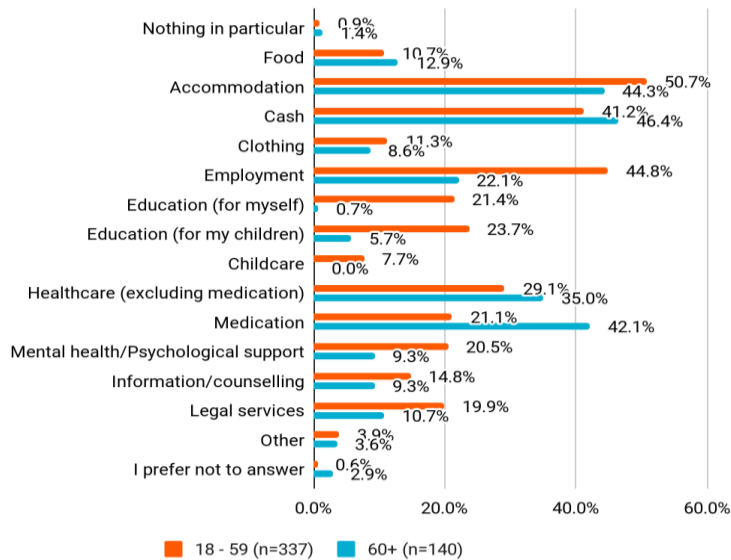


Breaking down the data reveals that a higher percentage of female respondents emphasise their requirements for healthcare (33%, n=396), medication (29%), and psychosocial support (19%) compared to male respondents (21%, 20%, and 9%,

²¹[Hidden Hardship](#): 1 Year Living in Forced Displacement for Refugees from Ukraine, February 2023

respectively, n=82). Additionally, for those aged 18-59, employment (45%, n=337), education for their children (24%), education for themselves (21%), and psychosocial support (21%) were more commonly reported, compared to individuals aged above 60. Expectantly, the older age group expressed a higher need for medication (42%, n=140) compared to the younger age group (21%).

Figure 6. "What assistance would have been helpful in your situation in Poland?" - multiple answers - respondents aged 18 - 59 (n=337) and aged above 60 (n=140).



Future plans

Lastly, respondents were asked about their future plans. Specifically, they were inquired whether they are planning, at some point, to return to Ukraine for the long term.

The largest share of respondents (44%, n=470) mentioned they do not know yet whether they will return to Ukraine at some point in the future, while almost one-third (29%) reports they are planning to return at some point. 18% mentioned they are planning to stay in Poland, while 7% plan to move to another country. 3% preferred not to answer the question. These findings are in line with those discerned through Upinion’s engagement with refugees from Ukraine in Poland early 2023.²²

Disaggregation highlights that relatively more male respondents (29%, n=82) are planning to stay in Poland, compared to female respondents (16%, n=385). The latter expressed more to be unsure of future plans (46%) compared to men (35%). Additionally, mostly people aged above 60 reported they want to return at some point (43%, n=134), compared to those aged 18 to 59 (23%, n=332). The latter group report more that they don’t know yet (48%), compared to older individuals above 60 (36%).

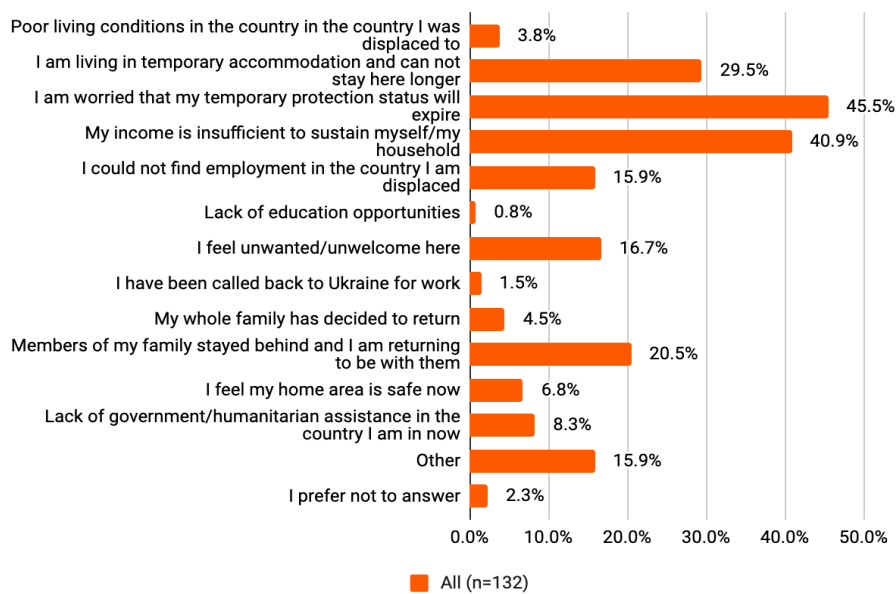
²² [Hidden Hardship](#): 1 Year Living in Forced Displacement for Refugees from Ukraine, February 2023

Those who reported they are planning to return for the long term, were asked to specify the main reasons for this using a multiple answer format. Respondents mostly mentioned that they are worried about the expiration of their temporary protection status (**46%**, n=132), which was also found to be one of the main reasons for why respondents mentioned not feeling safe in Poland (see previous section).

Having insufficient income to sustain themselves and their households (**41%**) and not being able to live in their temporary accommodation anymore (**30%**) was also mentioned by considerable groups as reasons for why they plan to return to Ukraine for the long-term.

Poor living conditions in Poland (**4%**), lack of educational opportunities (**1%**), as well as the lack of government or humanitarian assistance (**8%**) are indicated by few respondents only. Similarly, being called back to Ukraine for work (**2%**) or feeling that it is safe to return to Ukraine (**7%**) seem not to be a driving factor for many respondents to return.

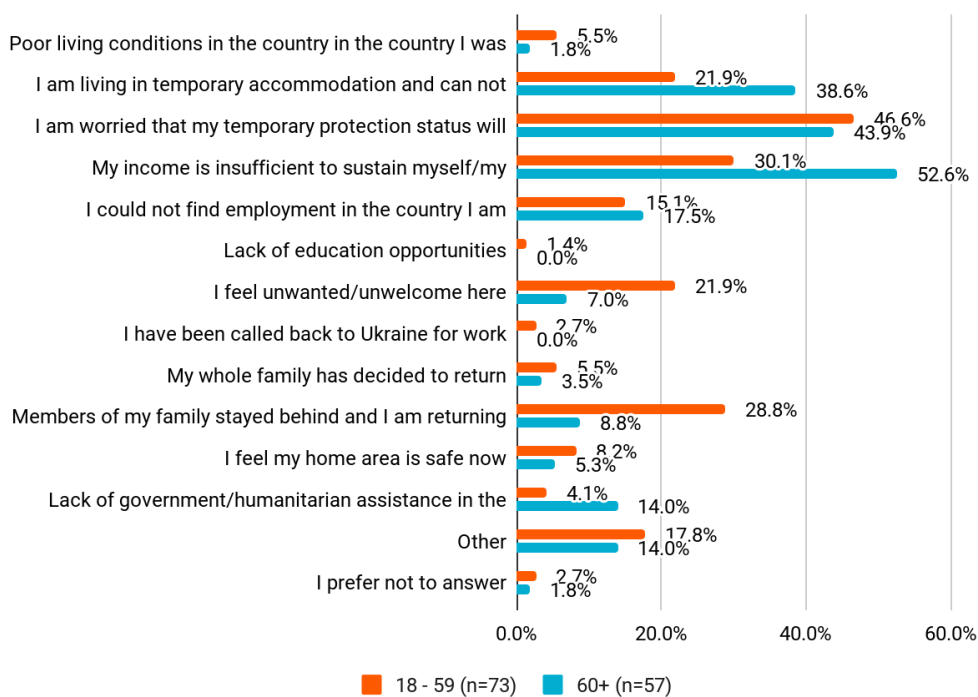
Figure 7. "What will be your main reason to return to Ukraine?" - multiple answers - all respondents who indicated they are planning to return (n=132)



Disaggregation highlights that it is mostly men reporting they are planning to return because they are worried they can not stay in their temporary accommodation (**43%**, n=21) or they will have insufficient income to sustain their livelihoods (**48%**), compared to women (26% and 39%, respectively, n=110). More women indicated that they plan to return because they want to reunite with family members who stayed behind (**23%**), compared to men (**5%**).

Furthermore, individuals aged above 60 relatively more frequently reported that their income is insufficient to sustain themselves and their households (53%, n=57), compared to those aged 18 to 59 (30%, n=73). The same yields for not being able to stay in temporary accommodation any longer, which was more mentioned as a reason by those aged above 60 (39%), compared to younger individuals (22%). Conversely, the younger age group seemed to report feeling unwanted or unwelcome in Poland more often (22%) than individuals aged above 60 (7%). Similarly, the desire to return to family members in Ukraine was relatively more expressed by people aged 18 to 59 (29%) compared to older individuals (9%).

Figure 8. “What will be your main reason to return to Ukraine?” - multiple answers - respondents aged 18 - 59 (n=73) and aged above 60 (n=57) who indicated they are planning to return



Moldova: Country analysis

Displacement patterns

When refugees from Ukraine in Moldova were asked to indicate the duration of their displacement, it is revealed that the largest share of respondents (**48%**, n=327) have been displaced for 18 to 24 months, with relatively more people aged 18 to 59 (**51%**, n=277) reporting this compared to those older than 60 (**37%**, n=46). Additionally, more female respondents (**50%**, n=284) indicated they have been displaced already for the duration of 18 to 24 months, compared to a smaller subset of men (**40%**, n=38).

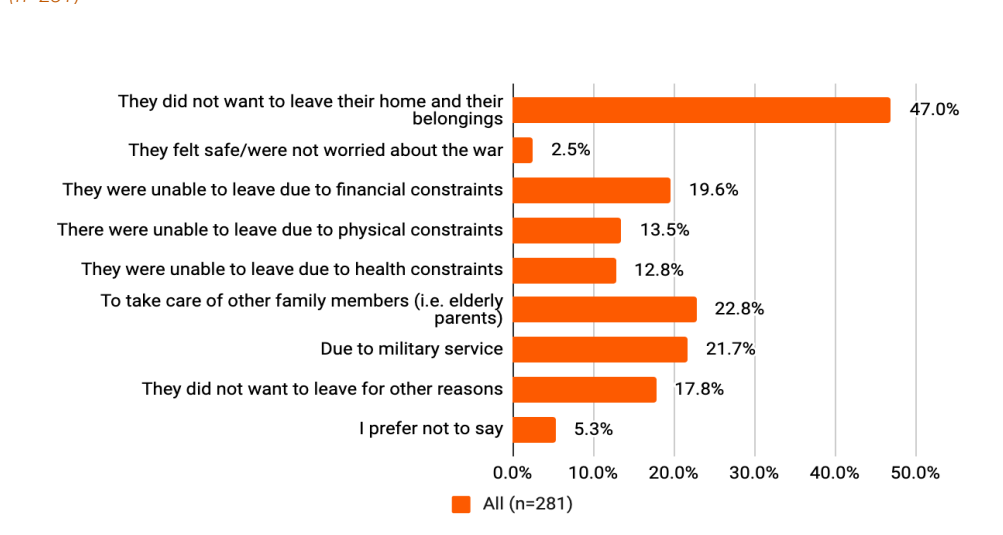
Following this, a quarter of respondents (**25%**) reported being displaced for 12 to 18 months, with considerably more individuals aged above 60 (**44%**, n=46) indicating this than younger individuals (**21%**, n=277). Overall, smaller groups reported displacement for the past 6 to 12 months (**10%**) or 1 to 6 months (**10%**).

Family members in Ukraine

A large majority of **86%** (n=327) stated they had family members remaining in Ukraine. A total of **13%** did not have any family members left in Ukraine, while **1%** preferred not to answer this question. When asked for the reasons for which the family members decided to stay in the country - using a multiple answer format, the largest share (**47%**, n=281) reported they did not want to leave their home and belongings. Notable is that more female respondents (**49%**, n=249) mentioned this as a reason compared to male respondents (**33%**, n=30).

A variety of other reasons were also provided, including caretaking responsibilities for other family members (**23%**), military service (**22%**), and financial constraints (**20%**). Similarly to the reasons for family members of displaced individuals in Poland staying put, only a negligible number (**3%**) mentioned that feelings of safety or not being worried about the war was a considerable factor for family members to stay behind. Furthermore, a significant proportion (**18%**) reported that their family members had other motivations for remaining in Ukraine, which were not further specified.

Figure 9. "What best describes their reasons for staying in Ukraine?" - multiple answers - respondents from Moldova (n=281)

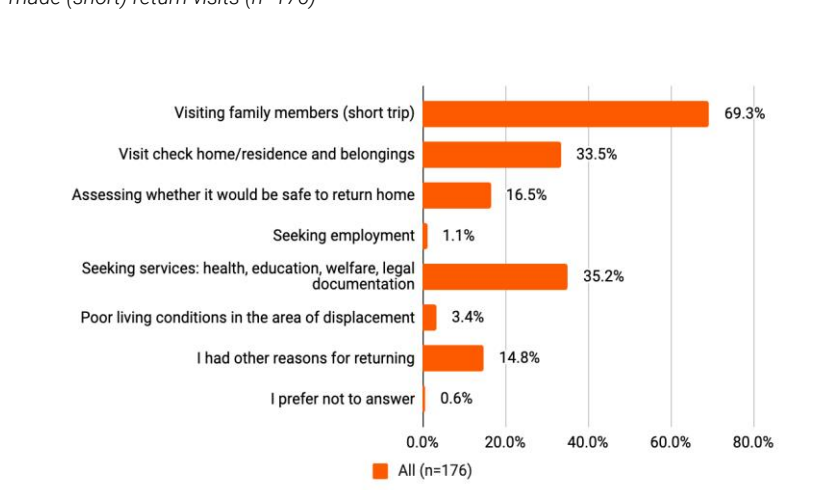


Return visits

When asked whether they had returned home (in Ukraine) for a visit since the refugee respondents had been displaced to Moldova, **55%**(n=324) reported they had returned for a short period of time. More individuals above 60 (**65%**, n=46) mentioned they had made a return visit compared to those aged 18 to 59 (**54%**, n=274). Relatively more females (**58%**, n=282) indicated this compared to males (**41%**, n=37). A total of **44%** mentioned they had not returned yet, more males (**57%**) than females (**42%**), and a total of **1%** preferred not to answer the question.

Amongst those who indicated to have returned for a temporary visit, the primary reason was mentioned to visit family members (**69%**, n=176). This was followed by seeking (health/education/welfare/legal) services (**35%**) and visiting to check their previous residence and belongings (**36%**).

Figure 10. "What were your reasons for returning home?" - multiple answers - respondents from Moldova who had made (short) return visits (n=176)



Additionally, respondents were provided with a list of statements, from which they were asked to select the main reasons that best describe why they did not want or plan to stay in Ukraine after temporarily returning. Out of this list of statements, respondents predominantly selected that they did not feel safe in their previous home area due to the war (**73%**, n=175), a primary reason that was mentioned relatively more by people aged 18 to 59 (**76%**, n=144) compared to people aged above 60 (**60%**, n=30).

Other reasons that were highlighted were the fact that their home area is still under heavy shelling or missile attacks (**31%**), that it is impossible to continue employment in their home area due to the war (**20%**), or that immediate family is still living outside of Ukraine and do not want to return (**17%**).

Lack of access to government support (**3%**), humanitarian assistance (**7%**), or infrastructure and services (**7%**) was only mentioned by few as a reason for not returning.

The impact of war

Similar to individuals in Poland, respondents in Moldova were surveyed regarding the direct repercussions of the conflict on their lives.

Damage to residences

Firstly, respondents were asked whether their house or residence has been damaged since 24 February 2022, as a result of shelling, artillery fire, missiles, UXOs, or other aspects of the war. **24%** (n=305) reported 'Yes', while **70%** mentioned it was not. **6%** did not prefer to answer the question.

Those who reported their house or residence had been damaged, were followed-up by the question whether they were able to access any helpful services after this happened. A majority of **78%** (n=73) reported they were unable to, including **48%** who were unable to find available support, despite looking for it, and **30%** who did not seek any support. **16%** reported 'Yes', constituting **4%** who mentioned it was provided by the government and **12%** who received it from humanitarian organisations.

Physical injuries

Subsequently, respondents were questioned whether they or their direct family members had been injured since 24 February 2022, as a result of UXOs, artillery fire, missile attacks, and shelling in Ukraine.

19% (n=304) reported 'Yes', of which **18%** mentioned the injury of a family member and **1%** indicated this affected themselves. **70%** mentioned they or their family members remained unharmed. **11%** preferred not to answer the question.

Those reporting 'Yes', received the follow-up question: 'were you or your family members able to access healthcare services after the injury?'. **22%** (n=58) reported they were unable to, despite seeking support. An equal group of **22%** did not actually seek healthcare services in Ukraine after the injury happened, and **40%** were able to

get support in health facilities or hospitals. A relatively considerable minority (**17%**) opted not to answer the question.

Loss of family members

When asked whether the start of the war since 24 February 2022 also resulted in a loss of an immediate or extended family member, **39%** (n=303) reported that it had had (**13%** reported the loss of an immediate family member, and **26%** an extended one). The other **55%** of respondents did not experience this or choose not to answer the question (**8%**).

Of those having to experience this, the majority of **53%** (n=114) did not seek support, while **16%** could not find or access support, despite looking for it. Amongst those who had found bereavement support or counselling (**23%**), most accessed it through humanitarian assistance (**16%**) while **7%** received it from healthcare providers.

Livelihoods, feelings of safety, education, and humanitarian assistance

Livelihoods in Moldova

Using a multiple-choice format, respondents were asked about their primary sources of income while outside Ukraine. Most respondents (**71%**, n=319) mentioned receiving assistance from humanitarian agencies. This was followed by savings (**29%**), employment (**27%**), and remittances from family members or friends (**16%**), three sources more mentioned by people aged 18 to 59, rather than people aged above 60. Overall, social protection/pension from Ukraine (**10%**) or Moldova (**5%**) was reported less, reflecting the relatively low number of elderly in the sample compared to Poland. **8%** mentioned they did not have any source of income at all.

When comparing these findings to Upinion's conversation with refugees from Ukraine in Moldova from early 2023, it is noticeable that the reliance of savings had significantly dropped - from being a main source of income for **47%** (n=129) of respondents to **29%** (n=319) - while dependency on aid increased from **55%** (n=129) to **71%** (n=319).²³ It should be noted that the samples of respondents were not the same.

55% (n=318) expressed that their source of income was only just sufficient to meet basic needs.²⁴ **37%** reported being unable to meet their basic needs at all. A marginal **6%** reported no issues meeting their basic needs, and **2%** of the respondents chose not to respond to this question.

Those who had indicated their main source of income was social protection in the form of a pension were asked if, at any point since February 2022, they had had to return to work. Out of the respondents to this question, the majority (**65%**, n=46)

²³Hidden Hardship: 1 Year Living in Forced Displacement for Refugees from Ukraine, February 2023

²⁴ When asked to identify basic needs, multiple examples of basic needs were provided (such as food, water, clothing, shelter, sanitation) to enhance the respondents' understanding.

mentioned they did not have to do this, while a considerable **33%** reported 'Yes.' **2%** preferred not to answer the question.

The main reason for returning to work was indicated was the inability to support themselves or the household without working (**80%**, n=15).²⁵ Following this, **27%** of respondents mentioned they wanted to go back to work, without presenting or clarifying the factors contributing to this. No or few respondents mentioned that they needed to return for work since their profession was needed to support the war effort (**0%**) or that they needed to help with repair and restrictions (**7%**).

Feelings of safety in Moldova

To assess the situation of the respondents in their current country of displacement, Moldova, they were asked about their feelings of safety and their livelihoods.

Most respondents (**72%**, n=321) mentioned they feel safe most of the time in Moldova. Disaggregation of the data by age highlights that there are more people aged above 60 (**83%**, n=46) highlighting this compared to younger individuals (**70%**, n=271). **24%** indicated they only sometimes feel safe. Only **2%** reported they do not feel safe at all. A small subset (**2%**) preferred not to answer the question. These findings correspond to those established through Upinion's engagement with refugees from Ukraine in Moldova early 2023.²⁶

The main reasons for feeling safe were related to the stable situation in Moldova (**43%**, n=229), the presence of friends and family (**43%**), and the welcoming and supporting atmosphere of the Moldovan host community (**40%**). Employment opportunities (**22%**) and educational opportunities (**22%**) were each also indicated, considerably more by individuals aged 18 - 59 (**24%** and **21%**, respectively, n=188) compared to older people (**11%** and **5%**, respectively, n=38).

The main reasons for not or only somehow feeling safe were, for the majority of respondents, related to still being preoccupied by events happening in Ukraine (**58%**, n=83), followed by the distance and isolation from family members or friends (**43%**) and worries about the current legal status in Moldova and the prospect to return (**29%**). Hostility from the Moldovan host community was also mentioned by almost one-fifth (**19%**), with other respondents indicating to have other reasons (**27%**), crime and violence in the host community was mentioned as reason by very few (**1%**).

Education

The respondents who indicated having school-aged children in their household were asked about whether they have attended school, remotely or in-person, while being outside Ukraine. A total of **23%** (n=222) indicated their school-aged children were not attending any type of school. This percentage is roughly similar to the number of non-enrolled school-aged children reported by the 2023 Multi Sector Needs Assessment reported by REACH.²⁷

²⁵The low number of respondents (n) for this question necessitates cautious interpretation of the result.

²⁶[Hidden Hardship](#): 1 Year Living in Forced Displacement for Refugees from Ukraine, February 2023

²⁷<https://reliefweb.int/report/moldova/moldova-multi-sector-needs-assessment-msna-education-key-sectoral-findings-presentation-december-2023>

The largest share of respondents (44%) reported that their children attended in-person education in Moldova. This was followed by 40% who indicated their children followed online education provided by a Ukrainian school, and only 2% attended online education provided by a Moldovan school.

Data findings from Upinion’s engagements with refugees from Ukraine in early 2023 reflect a slightly larger percentage of respondents indicating that their children are out-of-school (34%, n= 126), than is currently the case (23%, n=222). The type of schooling attended by Ukrainian refugee children in Moldova is reportedly the same across the two data collection rounds.

Although the majority of respondents rated the quality of in-person schooling in Moldova as good (53%, n=95) or very good (23%). Almost one-fifth (18%) expressed a more neutral perspective (neither good nor bad). Only 5% deemed it bad or very bad.

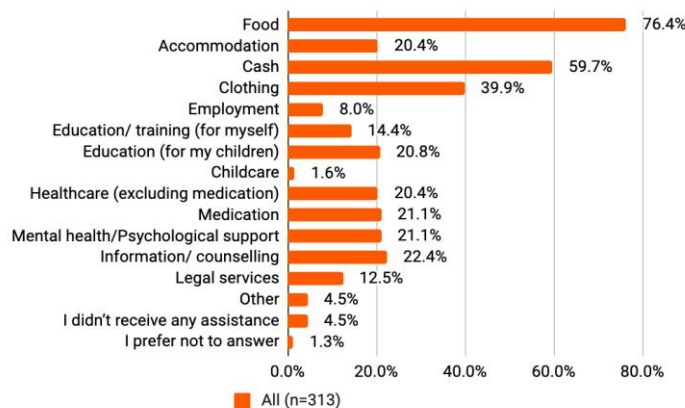
Regarding online schooling from Ukraine, a relatively higher proportion of individuals expressed a neutral opinion (40%, n=89), with a smaller group (34%) reporting it as good compared to those whose children attend in-person schooling in Moldova. For online schooling in Ukraine, a considerable group of 18% rated it as bad or very bad, while 6% regarded it as very good.

Humanitarian assistance

After gaining insights on refugees' income and education, they were asked about the assistance they had received and still required.

Only 5% (n=313) reported not having received any assistance. Amongst those who did receive some form of assistance, most respondents reported having received food (76%), followed by cash (60%) and clothing (40%). Smaller subsets of respondents reported receiving education for their children (20%), healthcare (21%), medication (21%), psychosocial support (21%), or information and counselling (22%). Less received seems to be employment (8%), educational opportunities for respondents themselves (14%), legal services (13%), and childcare support (2%).

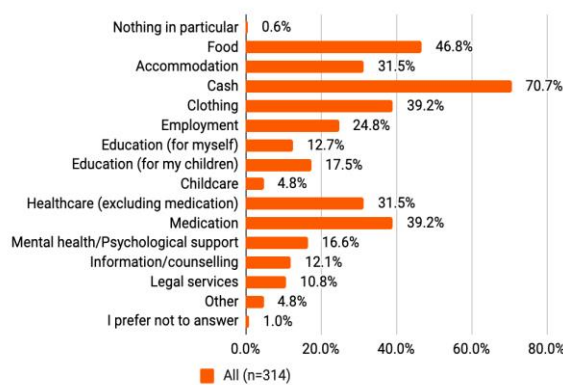
Figure 11. "Have you received any of the following assistance while being in your current host country?" - multiple answers - all respondents (n=476).



88% (n=294) of respondents mentioned that they had received this aid from international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) or United Nations (UN) agencies. Subsequently, only small subsets of respondents reported support from local civil society organisations or non-governmental organisations (NGOs) (19%), government entities (17%), or private companies (12%). Especially the role of employers (4%) seemed minimal in providing the above-mentioned support.

To gauge what individuals still find helpful in their current situation, they were asked about what assistance would be helpful. Only 1% mentioned they do not need anything in particular. Most respondents indicated cash assistance (71%, n=314) would be helpful, followed by food assistance (47%). Clothing (39%), medication (39%), healthcare (32%), and accommodation (32%) were all mentioned by considerable shares of respondents. Childcare (5%) was particularly mentioned by few.

Figure 12. "What assistance would have been helpful in your situation in Moldova?" - multiple answers - all respondents (n=314).



More Ukrainian refugees in Ukraine indicated in the most recent data collection round that they would need psychosocial support and education for their children than last year (respectively 7%, n=123, and 7%, n=123).²⁸

Breaking down the data reveals that a higher percentage of female respondents emphasise their requirements for food (**50%**, n=274), clothing (**43%**), healthcare (**33%**), and medication (**42%**), compared to male respondents (**22%**, **11%**, **17%**, and **22%**, respectively, n=36).

Future plans

Lastly, respondents were asked about their future plans. Specifically, they were asked whether they are planning, at some point, to return to Ukraine for the long term.

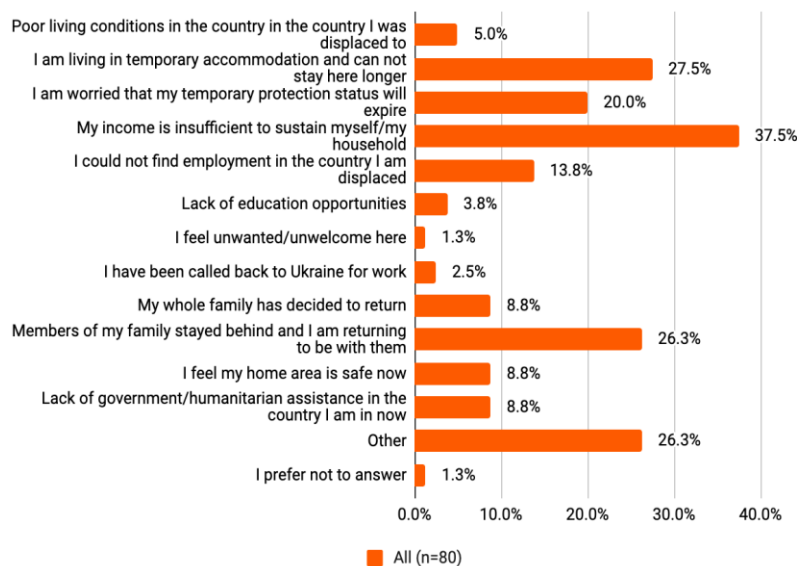
²⁸ [Hidden Hardship](#): 1 Year Living in Forced Displacement for Refugees from Ukraine, February 2023

The largest share of respondents (**41%**, n=312) mentioned they do not know yet whether they will return to Ukraine at some point in the future, with considerably more female respondents (**43%**, n=272) expressing this compared to men (**25%**, n=36). Relatively large subsets of respondents also reported they are planning to stay in Moldova (**30%**) or they are planning to return to Ukraine (**27%**). Only **2%** plan to move to another country, and **1%** preferred not to answer the question. Hence, the respondents' answers are somewhat equally distributed between delaying their decision, remaining in Moldova, and planning to return to Ukraine for the long term. These findings are in line with those established through Upinion's engagement with refugees from Ukraine in Moldova early 2023.²⁹

Those who reported they are planning to return for the long term, were asked to specify the main reasons for this, using a multiple answer format. Respondents mostly mentioned their income is or will be insufficient to sustain themselves and their households (**38%**, n=80). This is followed by worries about temporary accommodation and the inability to stay there longer (**28%**), the desire to reunite with family members who have stayed behind (**26%**), as well as alternative reasons that were not further specified (**26%**).

Poor living conditions in Moldova (**5%**), lack of educational opportunities (**4%**), feeling unwelcome (**1%**), as well as the lack of government or humanitarian assistance (**9%**) are indicated by few respondents. Similarly, being called back to Ukraine for work (**3%**) or feeling that it is safe to return to Ukraine (**9%**) seem not to be a driving factor for many respondents to return.

Figure 13. "What will be your main reason to return to Ukraine?" - multiple answers - all respondents who indicated they are planning to return (n=80)



²⁹ [Hidden Hardship](#): 1 Year Living in Forced Displacement for Refugees from Ukraine, February 2023

It is noteworthy that the reason “I feel my home area is safe now” was mentioned considerably more by refugees from Ukraine in Moldova during Upinion’s engagements in early 2023 than now, which was the second most cited reason then. The inability to sustain oneself in the host country and the desire to reunite with family members in Ukraine were mentioned to the same extent.³⁰

Poland vs. Moldova: Comparative country analysis

Interesting patterns can be observed when comparing the results among Ukrainian refugee populations in Poland and Moldova.

Displacement patterns

A prevalent trend is observed across both nations, with the largest proportion of respondents in both Poland (**58%**, n=496) and Moldova (**48%**, n=327) having been displaced for a duration ranging from 18 to 24 months, coinciding with the onset of the war.

There seems also similarity in the circumstances surrounding family separation between those who sought refuge in Poland and those in Moldova. Most individuals in both Poland and Moldova had to leave their family members behind. The reasons for their relatives staying put also show similarities, with reluctance to abandon home and possessions being the primary factor, followed by various other reasons such as financial constraints, health issues, caregiving duties, or military service.

A distinct trend emerges upon analysing the data regarding temporary return visits. In Moldova, the majority (**55%**, n=492) report having made a brief return visit at some point since their displacement, whereas in Poland, only **37%** (n=324) of individuals report the same. In line with the above, the largest proportion in Poland (**62%**) state they have been unable to make a return visit, while a smaller percentage (**44%**) of those in Moldova indicated this.

However, the motives for return visits appear largely consistent across countries. The primary reason cited for these visits is temporary reunions with family members and friends, followed by the pursuit of health, education, welfare, or legal services, and/or checking on residences and belongings. Interestingly, very few respondents in both countries mentioned poor living conditions in their area of displacement or the search for employment as reasons for their return visits.

Likewise, when queried about the reasons for not staying in Ukraine, the majority of respondents in Poland and Moldova cited feeling unsafe in their former residential areas due to the ongoing conflict. Substantial proportions mentioned their home areas being subjected to heavy shelling or missile attacks, the inability to continue

³⁰[Hidden Hardship](#): 1 Year Living in Forced Displacement for Refugees from Ukraine, February 2023

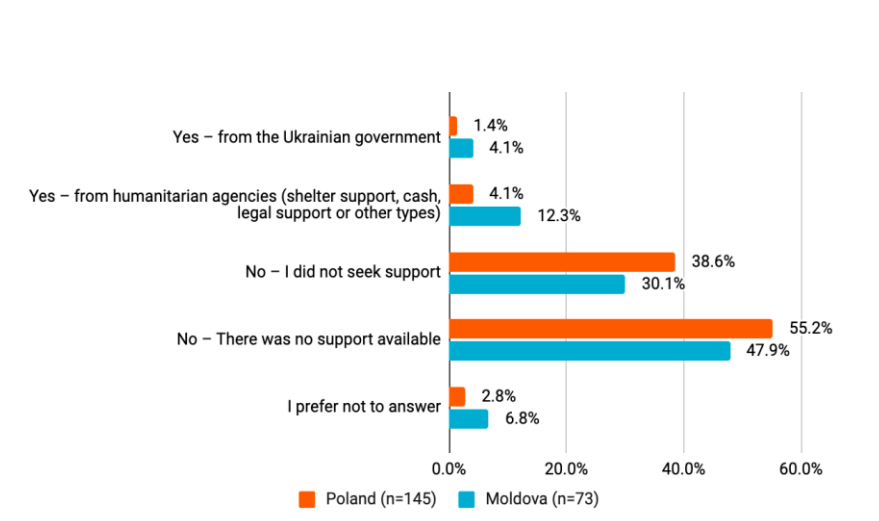
working there due to the war or having immediate family members residing outside of Ukraine.

The impact of the war

Comparing the answers of displaced people in Poland and Moldova regarding the impact of the war they have experienced, small differences can be noticed.

Respondents currently in Poland and who experienced damage to their housing or residence in Ukraine since 24 February 2022, as a result of shelling, artillery fire, missiles, UXOs, or other aspects of the war, were more likely to report they had not been able to access any helpful services in Ukraine after this happened (**94%**, n=145), compared to individuals in Moldova (**78%**, n=73).³¹ Important to note here is that, in both Poland and Moldova, the largest shares of those who were unable to access support reported there was no support available, followed by a group that did not seek support.

Figure 14. "Were you able to access any helpful services after this happened?"- respondents in Poland (n=145) and Moldova (n=73)



Although the majority in both Poland and Moldova reported not seeking bereavement support (**59%** and **53%**, respectively), more individuals in Poland (**28%**) stated they were unable to find or access this support despite actively seeking it, compared to those in Moldova (**16%**). In line with this, more respondents in Moldova (**23%**) actually accessed it, than in Poland (**8%**).

³¹ Important to note is that the support indicated in this question concerns support in Ukraine, and not in either host country.

Livelihoods, safety, education, and humanitarian assistance

Livelihoods

The primary sources of income for displaced individuals in Poland and Moldova appear to diverge significantly. While those displaced in Poland primarily cite employment (**58%**, n=487) as one of their main sources of income, a large majority in Moldova (**71%**, n=319) report receiving assistance from humanitarian agencies.

Within the Moldovan group, smaller subsets also mention depending on savings, employment, or remittances for income. In contrast, individuals in Poland tend to rely more on social protection (pension), humanitarian assistance, and savings. The relatively low number of respondents who rely on social protection, particularly when compared to Poland, can be attributed to the fewer number of elderly respondents in the Moldovan sample compared to the Polish sample.

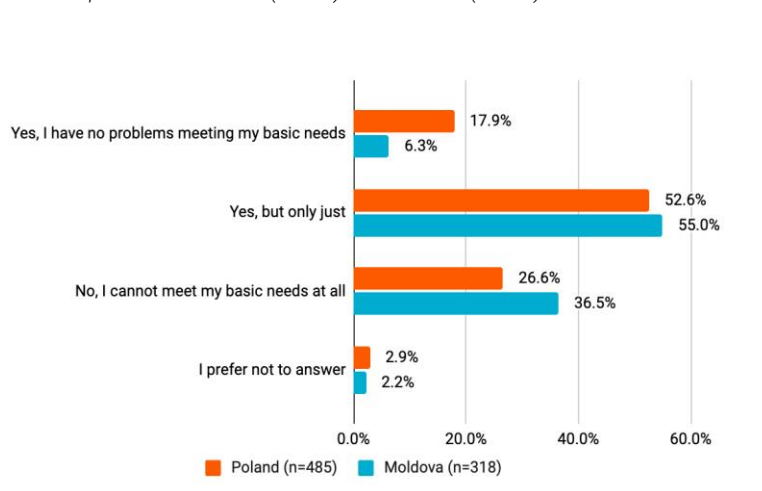
Figure 15. "What have been your main sources of income while outside Ukraine? - multiple answers - respondents in Poland (n=487) and Moldova (n=319)



In terms of meeting basic needs³², a higher proportion of individuals in Moldova (**37%**, n=318) reported being unable to meet their basic needs at all, compared to those in Poland (**27%**, n=485). Consequently, in Poland, a larger subset of respondents mention having no issues meeting their basic needs (**18%**), in contrast to individuals in Moldova (**6%**).

³² The explanation 'such as food, water, clothing, shelter, sanitation' was added to the question to provide a broad definition of what basic needs can entail.

Figure 16. "Is your income enough to meet your basic needs (food, water, clothing, shelter, sanitation, education, and healthcare?" - respondents in Poland (n=485) and Moldova (n=318)



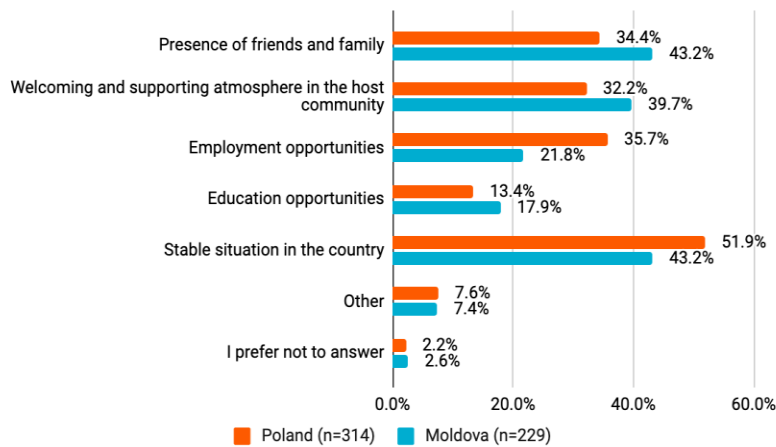
Analysing the answers in both countries to the questions on main sources of income and basic needs shows that, expectantly, higher rates of those who do not have any source of income are unable to meet their needs at all (**58%** in Poland, n=53, and **53%** in Moldova, n=25), compared to people with other sources of income.

Feelings of safety

In both countries, most of the individuals report feeling safe most of the time, with only a negligible number indicating not feeling safe at all. While in Poland, a relatively higher proportion of older individuals reported feeling safe most of the time, drawing conclusions about the elderly in Moldova is challenging due to the limited number of respondents aged over 70 in the Moldovan sample.

Examining the reasons behind feeling **safe**, residents in Poland primarily attribute their sense of safety to the stable situation within the country. Reasons cited by individuals in Moldova are more diverse, including the stability of Moldova itself, the presence of friends and family, and the supportive and welcoming atmosphere. It is noteworthy that employment opportunities were mentioned considerably more often as a factor contributing to feelings of safety by individuals currently residing in Poland (**36%**, n=314) compared to those living in Moldova (**22%**, n=229).

Figure 17. "Could you please select which of the statements best describes your reasons for feeling safe?" - respondents in Poland (n=314) and Moldova (n=229).



Exploring the factors contributing to feelings of **unsafety** in their current displacement country shows that respondents residing in Poland express considerably more concern about their legal status in the country and the potential risk of being compelled to return (**55%**, n=170), compared to their counterparts in Moldova (**29%**, n=83). Additionally, in Poland, a higher percentage of respondents mentioned the presence of a hostile or unwelcoming atmosphere within the host community (**29%**), as opposed to those in Moldova (**19%**). This difference could be explained by heightened tensions preceding the extension of Temporary Protection in Poland at times of data collection³³, along with the heated debate between Poland and Ukraine concerning grain and truck drivers obstructing the border.³⁴

Figure 18. "Could you please select which of the statements best describes your reasons for not or only sometimes feeling safe?" - respondents in Poland (n=170) and Moldova (n=83).



³³<https://migrant.info.pl/en/home/news-en/extension-of-temporary-protection-certificates-until-4-march-2025>

³⁴ <https://kyivindependent.com/polish-farmer-blockade-puts-polish-ukrainian-relations-at-further-risk/>

Education

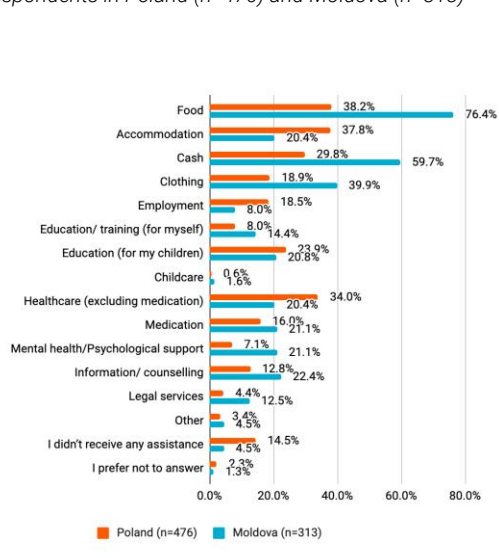
The largest share of respondents in both Poland and Moldova with school-aged children reported that their children were attending in-person education in their country of displacement (**35%**, n=485, and **31%**, n=317, respectively), followed by online schooling organised by a Ukrainian school (**25%** and **28%**, respectively). Similar proportions of respondents in both Poland (**21%**) and Moldova (**16%**) mentioned that their children were not attending any type of schooling.

Humanitarian assistance

When it comes to humanitarian assistance **received**, there appear to be considerable differences between displaced individuals in Poland and those in Moldova. A larger proportion of people in Poland (**15%**, n=476) reported not having received any assistance at all, compared to those in Moldova (**5%**, n=313).

In Moldova, the primary forms of assistance received by individuals were food (**76%**) and cash (**60%**), while those in Poland reported a more diverse range of support, albeit relatively less, including food (**38%**), accommodation (**38%**), cash (**30%**), and healthcare (**34%**). It is noteworthy that only support in employment and healthcare was relatively more common among individuals in Poland compared to those in Moldova.

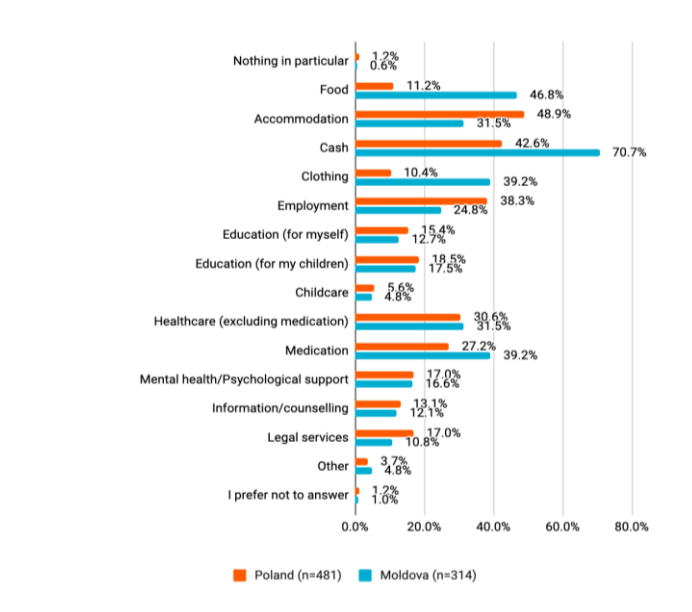
Figure 19. "Have you **received** any of the following assistance while being in your current host country?"- multiple answers - respondents in Poland (n=476) and Moldova (n=313)



Individuals in Moldova mostly reported having received this assistance from INGOs and UN agencies (**88%**, n=294), compared to those displaced in Poland (**43%**, n=391). The latter predominantly indicated government support (**55%**), while only **17%** of individuals in Moldova reported this.

Regarding **needed** assistance, the data indicates that individuals in Moldova primarily express a need for cash assistance (71%, n=314), followed by food assistance (47%), medication (39%) and clothing (39%). People in Poland report more varying needs, with accommodation-related support (49%, n=481), cash assistance (43%) and employment (38%) being mostly mentioned.

Figure 20. "What assistance would have been **helpful** in your situation in Poland/Moldova?" - multiple answers - respondents in Poland (n=481) and Moldova (n=314)



Future plans

When examining the future plans of displaced individuals in Poland versus those in Moldova, it is notable that a significantly higher proportion of people currently residing in Moldova (**30%**, n=312) report their intention to stay in their new destination, compared to those living in Poland (**18%**, n=470). Apart from this, most respondents in both countries, comprising equal groups, indicated uncertainty about their future movements (a total of **43%**), or expressed plans to return to Ukraine (a total of **27%**). In both countries, more female respondents were indicating the uncertainty of their plans, compared to male respondents.

Comparing the reasons for planning to return among respondents in both countries reveals that individuals in Poland predominantly are worried about the expiration of their temporary protection status (**46%**, n=132), while only one-fifth (**20%**, n=80) of individuals in Moldova report this. As previously mentioned, this is likely influenced by discussions regarding the extension of Temporary Protection for Ukrainian individuals in Poland during the data collection period, of which the decision on actual extension was made during data collection.³⁵ A considerable group of respondents in Poland also indicate they feel unwanted or unwelcome in their host country (**17%**), of which only **1%** of people in Moldova reported this. The tensions mentioned regarding grain and truck drivers, and the resulting strained relations between Ukrainian and Polish communities, may play a crucial role in explaining

³⁵<https://migrant.info.pl/en/home/news-en/extension-of-temporary-protection-certificates-until-4-march-2025>

this difference.³⁶

³⁶<https://kyivindependent.com/polish-farmer-blockade-puts-polish-ukrainian-relations-at-further-risk/>

5 Overall impact of the war

As highlighted in the previous chapters, all respondents who participated in this study were asked about the impact of the war on their lives, specifically on whether they had experienced certain events and if they have had access to different services during this challenging period. Important to note again is that - to all individuals - an initial message was provided (see Box 2) to acknowledge the sensitivity of the question, underscore it was asked to understand their situation better, as well as to remind them they had the option to skip the question.

Damage of housing or residencies

Firstly, all respondents were asked whether their house or residence had been damaged since 24 February 2022, as a result of shelling, artillery fire, missiles, UXOs, or other aspects of the war. **37%** (n=1898) reported 'Yes', while **58%** mentioned it was not. Few respondents (**5%**) did not prefer to answer the question.

Disaggregation highlights that more people currently residing in Ukraine (**43%**, n=1127) report having experienced damage to their residencies, compared to those currently in Poland (**31%**, n=466) or Moldova (**24%**, n=305).

Those who reported their house or residence had been damaged, were followed-up on with the question whether they were able to access any helpful services after this happened. The majority of **69%** (n=699) reported they were unable to, including **43%** who were unable to find available support and **26%** did not seek it. In total, **32%** indicated 'Yes' to the question, constituting **22%** who mentioned it was provided by humanitarian agencies and **10%** who received it from the government.

Figure 21. "Were you able to access any helpful services after this happened?" - respondents currently in Ukraine (n=481), Poland (n=145), and Moldova (n=73)



Physical injuries

Additionally, all respondents were questioned whether they or their direct family members had been injured since 24 February 2022, as a result of UXOs, artillery fire, missile attacks, and shelling in Ukraine.

18% (n=1885) reported 'Yes', with **14%** mentioning injured family members and **4%** indicating this affected themselves. **77%** mentioned they or their family members remained unharmed.

Those reporting 'Yes', were prompted the question: 'Were you or your family members able to access healthcare services after the injury?'. **23%** (n=209) were unable to, despite seeking support. **12%** did not seek healthcare services, and **55%** were able to get support in health facilities or hospitals. **10%** of respondents preferred not to answer the question.

In line with the previous findings, especially people in Ukraine (**62%**, n=209) seem to have had access to health facilities or hospital services, compared to those currently residing in Poland (**48%**, n=63) or Moldova (**38%**, n=58).

Loss of family members

When being asked whether the war also resulted in a loss of an immediate or extended family member, **38%** (n=1876) reported they had (**15%** reported an immediate family member and **23%** an extended one). The other respondents did not experience this (**57%**), or they preferred not to answer the question (**7%**).

Of those having to experience this, **64%** (n=620) did not seek any support, with considerably more men (**81%**, n=101) reporting this compared to women (**61%**, n=512). **13%** could not find or access support, despite looking for it. Only **16%** of all people who experienced this got support, either through healthcare providers (**6%**) or through humanitarian organisations (**10%**).

A breakdown of data reveals that only people in Ukraine (**20%**) mentioned they could not access or find support, compared to no individuals in Poland or Moldova. Important to additionally note is that especially individuals residing in Poland (**81%**, n=123) report they did not seek any support after experiencing family loss, compared to individuals in Ukraine (**59%**, n=400) or Moldova (**62%**, n=97).

Conclusion

This research conducted for Norwegian Refugee Council in Moldova and Poland, highlights that refugees from Ukraine continue to suffer ongoing trauma, family separation and daily struggles to make ends meet. Two years after the escalation of the war, the initial incredible hosting solidarity is fading. As the funding available to the response drops, and donor priorities shift to other crises, the hardship of vulnerable refugees in the neighbouring countries persists.

The UNHCR “no return” advisory remains in effect for Ukraine signalling the conditions for safe return are not fulfilled. For refugees in Poland and Moldova facing longer stays, it is important to secure sustainable funding to support their self-reliance and pursuit of durable solutions. This support should encompass securing legal status, affordable and adequate housing, access to education, language and vocational training, employment opportunities, as well as avenues for self-employment. Moreover, it is imperative to prioritise equity-based assistance for the most vulnerable individuals.

At the same time, the acute needs of newly arrived refugees from Ukraine must be addressed. According to UNHCR and corroborated by NRC teams and partners on the ground, these caseloads have higher vulnerabilities and fewer resources than previous arrivals. Forced displacement is likely to continue, albeit at a smaller scale, as the war shows no sign of stopping. Humanitarian organisations, the governments of Poland and Moldova, and donors need to step up their efforts to provide critical assistance to mitigate tensions and address enduring needs.

The response in Moldova and Poland has been, and must continue to be, locally led. Donor states in particular, should not allow the successes of the response over the last two years to justify drastically reduced funds or an attitude of complacency when it comes to the continuing needs of Ukrainian refugees. The conflict in Ukraine is unpredictable but shows no signs of abating and further displacement both inside and outside Ukraine is likely. Going forward, the international community and humanitarian actors must prioritise investment in local actors who have been and will continue to be at the frontline of protecting Ukrainian refugee populations fleeing the devastating impacts of the war.