Forced migration and the war in Ukraine

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In the first month of the full-scale war, 3.6 million people left Ukraine. Around 6.5 million others, according to the estimate of the International Organization for Migration, left their permanent place of residence and moved within the country. On the first few days, there were miles-long queues to the checkpoints on Ukraine's borders with EU countries, primarily with Poland. Up to 150,000 people crossed the border every day. There were equally long traffic jams at the exits from big cities which were bombed right at the beginning of the war. According to the State Border Service, by March 20, the queues on the borders with EU countries had shrunk significantly.

However, not just getting to the border but even leaving their hometown to move to safer regions is still a difficult task for residents of many Ukrainian towns and cities. An attempt to leave Mariupol, Chernihiv, Sumy and other cities can cost someone their life due to disruptions of humanitarian corridors and constant Russian shootings of civilian cars.

The Cedos Think Tank works to monitor the impact of the war on the movement of populations within the country and abroad. With this work, we seek to record the most important decisions and events in the field and to outline the key challenges.

In our monitoring, we use published regulatory documents, survey results, reports by Ukrainian and international media as well as by government representatives.

This paper consists of two parts: part one is about domestic migration, and part two is about international migration. Part one presents the available data on the number of people who have moved within Ukraine and their evacuation paths; on the decisions of central and local government bodies which shape the mechanisms for receiving the displaced; on changes in the policies that apply to internally displaced people (hereafter referred to as IDPs), particularly with regard to registration and social security. Part two reviews the data on the number of people who have traveled abroad; the decisions by European government bodies which establish the mechanisms for receiving refugees; as well as the attitudes towards Ukrainian refugees abroad.

In this text, the word "refugee" refers to all the people who have been forced to leave Ukraine and travel to other countries because of the war, regardless of whether they have been officially granted asylum or applied for it.

● Domestic migration

The number of IDPs

Based on the [nationwide survey](#) conducted by the IOM on March 9–16, 2022, the following numbers of people have left various Ukrainian regions and moved to other regions: 2,344,936 people have escaped from the East, 1,936,839 from Kyiv and Kyiv Region, 1,302,022 from the North, 485,829 from the South, 220,243 from the Center, and 187,854 from the West.

It is safe to assume that the **displacement within the country happened in waves depending on the existence of hostilities in a particular region or locality.** Based on the data from the aforementioned IOM survey, 48 percent of the displaced people in Ukraine left their place of residence when the war started, 45 percent left their place of residence when the war reached their district, and 5 percent left their place of residence in anticipation of the conflict.

According to the IOM, **the highest fraction of people, over 2.5 million, have moved to the Western macroregion. However, data published by the governments of western regions do not match this estimate.** The difference can be explained by the fact that only some of the displaced choose to report their arrival to local government bodies; registration is most likely to happen in the cases when the new arrivals apply for help with accommodation or for humanitarian aid.

Despite the imperfect methods of collecting information, the data from regional administrations demonstrate significant disparities in the numbers of newly received IDPs in different regions. As of March 17, 2022, regional governments reported the following numbers of IDPs: Lviv Region — 200,000, Ivano-Frankivsk Region — 80,000, Zakarpattia Region — 80,000, Khmelnytskyiy Region — 70,000, Chernivtsi Region — 50,000, Ternopil Region — 45,000, Volyn Region — 23,000, Rivne Region — 20,315.

Some IDPs continue to move both within Ukraine and across the border. Almost half (44%) of the residents of Ukraine had to temporarily separate from their families during the war. So further movement of IDPs may be associated either with family reunification attempts or, on the contrary, with efforts to ensure the safety of the most vulnerable family members (such as pregnant women or women with small children) by moving them abroad.

Some people have been forced to leave their homes for the second time. **Many of the regions and cities which are now in the areas where active fighting takes place have been receiving IDPs since 2014.** According to the Ministry of Social Policy, about 1.46 million IDPs from the temporarily occupied territories of Donetsk and Luhansk Regions as well as the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and Sevastopol had been registered by 2021. The highest numbers of IDPs were recorded in Donetsk Region (512,000) and Luhansk Region (282,000), in Kyiv (163,000), and in Kharkiv Region (136,000). According to Cedos data, the list of cities and towns with high shares of IDPs before the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine included Severodonetsk (44% of IDPs), Mariupol (20%), Izyum (13%), Bucha (11%), Irpin (9%), Berdyansk (8%), Kyiv (5,5%) and others. All of them are now suffering from active hostilities.

Evacuation paths

The available means of evacuation are evacuation trains organized by the Ukrainian Railway, private cars, and evacuation buses from active warzones.

Within a few hours from the beginning of Russia's full-scale invasion, the Ukrainian Railway [reported](#) launching the first evacuation trains which have been fare-free ever since. One can [board](#) these trains via a live queue, in which children, women and the elderly have priority. At least in the first few weeks, there were more passengers than places on the trains, and many passengers had to stand for the entire trip or sit in the corridors. At least a few [cases](#) of shelling of evacuation trains and railway infrastructure have been recorded. [According to](#) Kyrylo Tymoshenko, Deputy Head of the Office of the President, the Ukrainian Railway evacuated 2.77 million people between March 1 and 20.

As for road vehicles, people evacuate by car and take evacuation buses organized by government bodies and by volunteers or NGOs, such as the [Free Belarus Center](#) or [Republic Pilgrim](#). Regular private transportation carriers mostly do not travel to areas with active hostilities.

On March 5, Iryna Vereshchuk, the Minister for the Reintegration of the Temporarily Occupied Territories, [announced](#) the opening of the first two humanitarian corridors from Mariupol and Volnovakha. **These and the next humanitarian corridors from other cities have been disrupted by Russia on multiple occasions.** By now, various humanitarian corridors operate every day, but a few of them regularly fail to open. For instance, on [March 23](#), just 7 out of the 9 approved corridors worked. As of March 22, humanitarian corridors have helped [evacuate](#) 211,000 people, including 32,000 from Mariupol, according to Kyrylo Tymoshenko, the Deputy Head of the Office of the President.

Registration of IDPs

Some territorial **communities started registering internally displaced people soon after the Russian invasion and the arrival of the first IDPs.** For example, Ivano-Frankivsk [started the registration of IDPs](#) on March 3.

At that time, the national legislation on internally displaced people did not include the relevant amendments. So the documents which communities issued to IDPs in the first few weeks of the full-scale war are temporary and have limited use: the IDs or certificates only work in the territory of the specific region or community. The established system of registration was used

by local governments, in particular, to account for and record the volumes of humanitarian aid (food, personal hygiene items, clothes, shoes) given to IDPs.

On March 13, the Cabinet adopted amendments to the [Procedure](#) for issuing a certificate of registration as an internally displaced person ([Decree 269](#)). Since then, **all people who have left the regions with active hostilities since the [introduction of martial law](#) on February 24 are recognized as internally displaced persons**. These regions are listed in [Decree 204-r](#), and the list currently includes Volyn, Dnipropetrovsk Region, Donetsk Region, Zhytomyr Region, Zaporizhia Region, Kyiv Region, Luhansk Region, Mykolaiv Region, Odesa Region, Sumy Region, Kharkiv Region, Kherson Region, Chernihiv Region, and the city of Kyiv.

As of March 18, some communities were unable to open the relevant electronic case files and had no access to the registries and the Unified Information Database on IDPs, so they could not issue certificates immediately after the amendments to the Cabinet decree were introduced. For instance, the community of [Rivne](#) made preliminary lists of internally displaced persons in order to issue them certificates later. The expectation was that all communities would be able to start a full-fledged registration of IDPs from March 21.

On March 21, the [Cabinet announced](#) a programme of support for IDPs which aims to provide welfare payments to the displaced, compensation to employers for employing them, and compensation of utility fees to individuals and communities that host IDPs for free. In particular, the government will pay the minimum financial aid to each IDP in the amount of 2,000 UAH, or 3,000 UAH in the case of people with disabilities and children.

Thus, **the IDPs who applied for registration immediately upon arrival now have to register once again** to have their information included in the Unified Information Database on Internally Displaced People and to be able to receive welfare payments from the government. This may be a challenge for communities and requires [additional communication](#). There may be a need to explain what the registration is for and what kind of social support can be received by registered IDPs.

There are recorded cases when local government representatives [declared](#) the registration mandatory. However, registering as an IDP is a right and not an obligation for the displaced, because they need to apply for a certificate. In addition, the displaced who have registered can apply for cancellation of their

IDP certificate at any time (according to Part 1 of Article 12 of the Law "On ensuring the rights and liberties of internally displaced persons").

Mechanisms for receiving IDPs: community capacities and the needs of the displaced

The procedure of registration as an IDP and adding a person's information to the relevant registry involves asking the IDPs about their current needs and recording these needs (according to Decree 509). However, there is no capacity to analyze and generalize this information. Moreover, no surveys have been conducted about the needs of IDPs yet. So we can assume that the needs of IDPs are mostly determined individually and based on in-person requests.

On the other hand, **many Ukrainian communities already have experience in receiving high numbers of forcefully displaced people, which can be useful for determining the needs of IDPs.** Some communities started preparing for their arrival just before February 24: they opened local headquarters, organized the work of reception points, and took stock of the available housing in order to use it to accommodate IDPs.

At the moment, the newly established or restored headquarters employ both government workers and volunteers. In addition, help is provided by a number of NGOs and international organizations (Ukrainian Volunteer Service, Caritas, TU Platform, Right to Protection). Aid is provided to IDPs in the following key areas:

- humanitarian aid: clothing, personal hygiene products, food packages, etc. (e.g. Kropyvnytsky, Vinnytsia);
- social dining rooms, for free or at low prices (Uzhhorod, Ivano-Frankivsk);
- mental health care for adults and children (Chernivtsi, Verkhovyna, Ivano-Frankivsk);
- transportation: free electronic passes for public transit (Ternopil);
- legal consultations (Lviv);
- informal education, particularly free courses for learning Ukrainian and conversation clubs (Lviv, Ternopil, Khmelnytsky).

● International migration

The number of people who have evacuated abroad

According to the UNHCR, since the beginning of the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine on February 24, **3,626,546 people had left Ukraine as of March 22.** The data on the number of refugees are approximate and may change, including retroactively.

The highest number of people left Ukraine between February 27 and March 9. In this period, 1,649,088 people crossed the Ukrainian border to leave the country; over 150,000 people were leaving the country daily. On March 6, 210,526 crossed the border—the highest number for one day. Since March 17, the number of people leaving has been gradually decreasing, which means that the first wave of refugees has dwindled. UNHCR [estimates](#) that **another 4 million people may leave Ukraine** in total.

According to the data from border crossing checkpoints, as of March 22, the numbers of people who have left for countries bordering Ukraine are as follows:

- **Poland: 2,144,244** ([according](#) to local government representatives, people from Ukraine mostly arrive to Poland's biggest cities, particularly Warsaw and Krakow, so these cities' capacity for accommodating refugees is gradually being exhausted; thus, refugees are advised to travel to other cities or other EU countries);
- **Romania: 555,021** (this number also includes people who left through Moldova and then crossed to Romania);
- **Moldova: 371,104** (this is the highest rate of Ukrainian refugees per capita; at the same time, the media [report](#) that only just over 100,000 of them are staying in the country);
- **Hungary: 324,397**;
- **Russia: 271,254** (according to Russian government data which may be false; this number probably includes the people who have been forcibly deported from the temporarily occupied Ukrainian territories; according to [Decree](#) 188-r of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine of February 26, 2022, all border crossings on the Ukrainian-Russian border have been closed since February 28);
- **Slovakia: 256,838**;
- **Belarus: 4,938** (according to Belarusian government data; this number may include the people who have been [forcibly deported](#) from the

temporarily occupied Ukrainian territories; just like in the case of Russia, all border crossings on the Ukrainian-Belarusian border have been closed since February 28).

The number of people leaving Ukraine per day
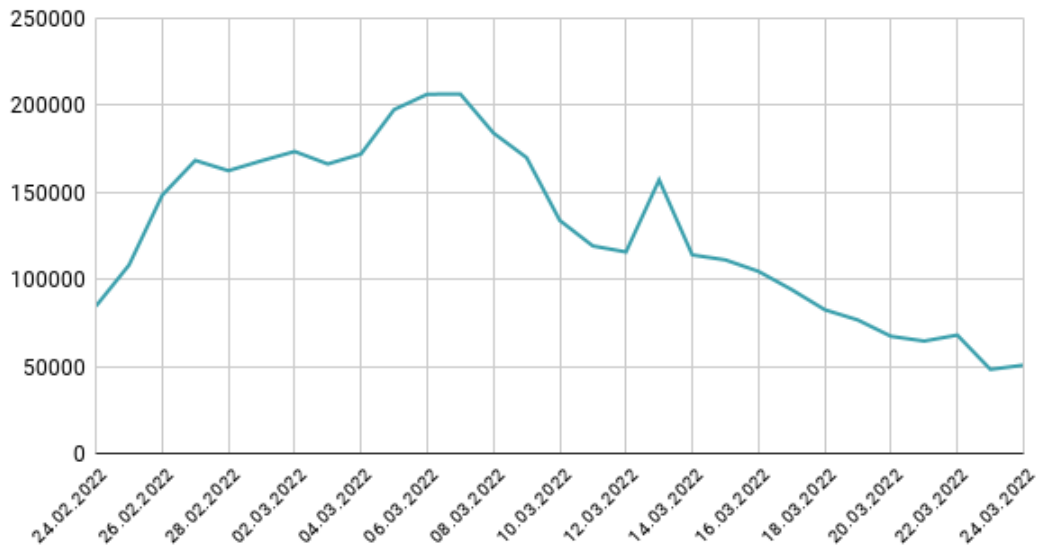
Data: UNHCR

For some of these people, the countries that border Ukraine are transit points because they are heading for other EU countries, particularly Germany, Austria, Czech Republic, Italy, France, Spain, Portugal, Baltic countries, etc. A relatively small number of Ukrainians are also seeking asylum outside the EU.

Since there are no mandatory border checks within the EU, we can estimate the number of forced migrants from Ukraine in the EU countries that do not share a border with Ukraine based on other sources. The key source is the estimates by the relevant agencies in destination countries, based on the number of free public transit passes issued to refugees from Ukraine for traveling around the country or on the number of people who have used the buses arranged by national governments, municipalities or NGOs so they could reach a particular country from Poland, Slovakia, Romania or Hungary. Data from mobile service providers are another alternative source of information. The number of refugees from Ukraine in these countries can also be estimated based on the data about their registration in government agencies, such as applications for temporary protection, for welfare payments, and/or for registration in temporary accommodation places for those who need them.

According to the estimates of the **German** Ministry of Internal Affairs, as of March 22, the country had received about 232,000 refugees from Ukraine. Meanwhile, the social infrastructure of Berlin, one of the key cities through which Ukrainians arrive in Germany by train and bus from Poland and other countries that border Ukraine, has already been overloaded, so local government representatives recommend that refugees travel to other cities in the country. The refugees who have already arrived in the city and need to be provided with housing may be redistributed to other federal lands.

The **Austrian** Ministry of Internal Affairs estimates the number of refugees at 117,000 (as of March 14) and notes that about 75% of them may leave for other countries. In the first week (March 14–21) of registration for temporary protection, the country registered 17,000 refugees.

According to the data from mobile service providers, the **Czech Republic** has received over 270,000 refugees from Ukraine. 205,000 of them got special long-term visas upon arrival which permit their residence in the country; from March 22, these visas will be replaced with IDs certifying the status of people who have received temporary protection. According to the Czech Minister of Internal Affairs, the country is running out of capacity to receive more people. Just like in the case of Warsaw and Krakow in Poland and Berlin in Germany, the key challenge for Czech municipalities is the critical shortage of housing.

According to the **Lithuanian** State Department of Statistics, as of March 24, over 30,000 people had registered as refugees from Ukraine. In **Portugal,** as of March 22, 18,500 refugees from Ukraine had registered to receive temporary protection. However, the total number of refugees in this country may be somewhat higher. According to the estimates of the **Italian** Ministry of Internal Affairs, as of March 22, the country had received over 61,000 refugees from Ukraine. The **French** Ministry of Internal Affairs estimates the number of refugees at 26,000, 10,000 of whom have already received the status of a person under temporary protection. According to the **Estonian** Border Service, as of March 18, the country had received over 25,000 refugees from Ukraine, of whom around one fifth will be heading further to other countries.

Reception of forced migrants from Ukraine in EU countries

On March 4, 2022, the Council of the EU activated the Directive on temporary protection 2001/55/EC, which allows individuals who have left Ukraine since February 24, 2022, to stay in EU countries, except for Denmark, for a year with a possibility to extend their stay for up to three years.

Individuals with this status have the right to work, full access to health care, education and welfare.

Denmark is not bound by the provisions of this EU Directive due to the specifics of the country's membership in the European Union. However, on March 17, a special law was [passed](#) in Denmark, the provisions of which are similar to the EU Directive (the law entered into force on March 18). This law eases the process of obtaining asylum for refugees from Ukraine and is designed to enable them to start working, schooling and receiving social welfare as soon as possible after arriving in Denmark. It is possible to obtain a residence permit for two years with the possibility of an extension for one year.

However, the registration process has only just started in many countries, the procedure and its length varies from country to country and still has not been established in some countries. In many countries, the process of registration for each individual (from applying to receiving temporary protection) can also take a long time. The reason is that the relevant agencies do not have the sufficient resources to receive and process high numbers of applications. This is affected to a significant extent by each country's previous experience of receiving refugees, by the availability of the relevant infrastructure and workers, by the established mechanisms of interaction between government agencies.

In addition, **not everyone who was forced to leave Ukraine fleeing from the war seeks to register and obtain temporary protection.** Holders of biometric passports can stay in the EU territory freely for up to 90 days as travelers, which does not require any registration. Those who have kept their remote jobs and/or have enough savings to provide for themselves for a few months may not be viewing registration for this status as an urgent need.

Moreover, **some countries allow access to temporary housing even without a registration for obtaining temporary protection.** A significant number of refugees also find shelter with their family, friends, and in private homes of other people who have decided to host refugees.

Government bodies in European countries encourage their populations to provide housing for refugees from Ukraine and introduce initiatives to cover some of the costs. For instance, the Polish government has [adopted a law](#) on refugees from Ukraine which, among other things, offers financial aid to Polish citizens who host refugees in the equivalent of 9 euros per day.

The situation is similar with regard to receiving social aid and basic health care: a number of EU countries currently allow refugees from Ukraine to obtain these services without registering for temporary protection.

The experience of staying in a different country and interacting with the local bureaucratic institutions is itself new to many people fleeing the war. So some of the refugees have not registered with government agencies yet because they have not figured out how to do it and/or harbor certain fears associated with these procedures, such as the fear that obtaining temporary protection will prevent them from going back home when the war ends.

Forced displacement of people to Russia

We do not have the exact numbers of the people forcibly deported from the temporarily occupied regions of Ukraine since the beginning of the full-scale invasion.

According to the Ukrainian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as of March 24, the Russian army had deported around 6,000 residents of Mariupol to Russia; another 15,000 residents of the city's Livoberezhny District are under threat of deportation. In addition, the Headquarters of the Armed Forces of Ukraine report that Russian troops are forcibly evacuating residents of localities in Luhansk Region.

According to the Mariupol City Council, the deported people were first sent to so-called "filtration camps" where their papers and cell phones were checked. Later, some of these people were transported to Russian cities, while the fate of others remains unknown. It has also been reported that their Ukrainian passports and IDs have been confiscated. The media in Mariupol write that these people receive papers which **commit them to staying in the location where they are sent to for at least 2 years and to working for a company indicated in the paper.** The Central Intelligence Department of the Ukrainian Ministry of Defense notes that the deported Ukrainians may be offered employment in Sakhalin. In addition, according to the Ukrainian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Russian troops deported 2,389 children from the temporarily occupied territories of Donetsk and Luhansk Regions on March 19.

Forced displacement and employment, confiscation of IDs and deprivation of the freedom of movement violates the norms of international humanitarian law and constitutes a war crime, particularly according to the Geneva Conventions and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

Perception of people evacuated from Ukraine in destination countries

According to the data of the European Social Survey conducted in 2018, residents of European countries have a more favorable view of migrants with similar racial or ethnic identities. This can explain their openness to refugees from Ukraine and their willingness to show solidarity with them.

Representatives of EU governments and the media have expressed solidarity with and support for Ukrainians and everyone fleeing from the war on multiple occasions. They noted that Europe welcomes and provides safe shelter to people leaving Ukraine. In addition, the Council of the EU unanimously supported and immediately activated the Directive on temporary protection 2001/55/EC, which was not done during the mass displacement as a result of military conflicts in African and Middle Eastern countries.

In their coverage of the migration crisis that has resulted from Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, some reporters from the western media compared refugees from Ukraine to those who have fled from other armed conflicts. These **comparisons were mostly racist towards refugees of color.** A CBS News reporter called Ukrainians relatively "civilized" and "European," particularly when compared to Iraq or Afghanistan. Speaking about refugees from Ukraine, an ITV News reporter commented that Ukraine is Europe, not "a developing third world nation." In addition, journalists have noted that people leaving Ukraine are more likely to be characterized as "refugees" in the media, while the victims of wars in Africa and the Middle East are mostly called "migrants," which may have a more negative connotation. The development of this media image may affect the attitudes towards refugees from Ukraine.

We ask you to support the approach of victory through donations to help the Armed Forces of Ukraine and humanitarian initiatives.

The donations we are currently receiving for our work will be used to research and analyse the impact of the war on a civilian population.