

Poland

February 2021

UNHCR presence in Poland was established in 1992. Poland is signatory to the Refugee Convention and its Protocol. UNHCR focuses on advocacy to offer solutions and promote inclusion.

UNHCR works on **promoting a positive narrative** reflecting the contributions of refugees, encouraged by results of an opinion poll on public attitudes towards refugees in Poland (February 2021).

UNHCR focuses on: Access to territory, challenges in using alternatives to detention, quality of the individual integration programs, access to legal counselling and

POPULATION OF CONCERN

Refugees	12,780
Asylum-seekers	3,307
Stateless people	1,328

TOP THREE COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN

	Refugees		Asylum-seekers
Russia	9,855	Russia	2,500
Syria	547	Ukraine	279
Ukraine	495	Tajikistan	102

Data source: UNHCR 2020 Mid-Year Statistical report and UNHCR [data finder platform](#)

HIGHLIGHTS



Belarus crisis

Since mid-2020 an increased influx of asylum-seekers from Belarus is observed following the contested presidential elections. Polish authorities facilitate access to Polish territory (e.g. humanitarian visas with right to work) and ensure access to asylum



Partnerships

UNHCR is a partner in two large projects: On asylum and migration (with Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights and Halina Nieć Legal Aid Centre) and on state-funded legal aid (with Rule of Law Institute). The projects are funded by Norwegian and EEA grants.



Migration Strategy

In 2020, the Government started to work on a new Migration Policy. The Ministry of Interior and other Government institutions elaborated a migration diagnosis that includes persons of concern to UNHCR.

COVID-19 PREVENTION AND RESPONSE



Advocacy: UNHCR and the WHO advocate for the inclusion of persons of concern in socio-economic support programs and in the national vaccination scheme, together with WHO. Persons of concern have access to the same support as Polish citizens and UNHCR monitors the effectiveness of this access.



Inclusion of persons of concern: Asylum-seekers and refugees included in the national vaccination program.



Health: UNHCR monitors effective access to health care for persons of concern. When obstacles are identified, they are addressed with Polish authorities to find adequate solutions.



Communication with Communities: FAQs on COVID in three languages [here](#)



Refugee from Crimea delights Poles with Tatar delicacies

Story of a refugee who is running a restaurant. Read more [here](#)

Link to the Q&A for asylum-seekers: [here](#)

[Manual on Family Reunification procedures in Poland](#)

Key Priorities

- **Access to territory:** UNHCR monitors access to territory and the impact of COVID-19 restrictions at the EU external borders. Poland continues receiving asylum-seekers, especially from Belarus.
- **Asylum procedures:** UNHCR provides information and support to asylum-seekers, including legal assistance, ensuring effective access to procedures.
- **Integration:** Refugees' rights are mainstreamed with the exception for voting rights. UNHCR monitors the effectiveness of refugees' access to their rights and national services. UNHCR supports teachers to ensure quality education for children and works with social workers to improve the integration prospects of refugees.
- **Complementary Pathways:** UNHCR monitors the access of students from refugee-producing countries to higher education in Poland and advocates with selected universities to increase opportunities for refugee students.
- **Advocacy:** UNHCR regularly shares guidelines and policies with authorities and provides comments to key documents such as the new Migration Policy. UNHCR is also engaged with authorities and promotes changes in the legal framework on individual integration programs for refugees.

Working with Partners

- **Government:** UNHCR works with line ministries with responsibilities on asylum issues and integration of refugees, mainly Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Family and Social Policy. UNHCR collaborates closely with the Polish Border Guard regarding access to territory and with the Office for Foreigners on all phases of the asylum procedure
- **Other institutions:** UNHCR collaborates with the Union of Polish Metropolises to enhance local integration and with social workers and teachers as key actors to a successful integration. The Polish Ombudsman is a key partner as an independent institution monitoring human rights, including of PoC.

- **Civil society:** UNHCR collaborates with NGOs providing legal counselling and support to asylum-seekers and refugees in Poland (Halina Nieć Legal Aid Centre, Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights, Foundation for Somalia, Polish Hospitality Foundation, Rule of Law Institute). UNHCR has a MoU with the Warsaw Bar of Attorneys-at-Law to expand the network of lawyers providing legal support.
- **Other:** UNHCR engages legal clinics of universities to provide training on refugee law and offers regular workshops to journalists to improve reporting on refugees. We target with students to help them better understand complex issues regarding forced displacement, asylum and integration and we collaborate with the Church on some advocacy issues.
- **External Engagement:** UNHCR aims at enabling policy change in favour of asylum-seekers, refugees and stateless persons. UNHCR works on improving the individual integration programs to ensure refugees are fully integrated in and contributing to Polish society.

Statelessness

- Poland is not a party to any Statelessness Convention. There is no statelessness determination procedure and the domestic framework needs to be adjusted to prevent situations of statelessness.
- UNHCR is engaging Members of Parliament to present them the state of play and to encourage them to take on board recommendations made in UNHCR Mapping Statelessness in Poland (Sept. 2019) to address some of the gaps identified in this study.

UNHCR Presence in Poland

Staff:

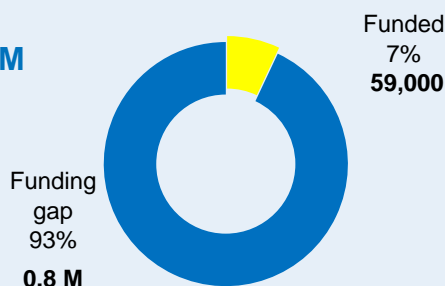
5 National Staff
2 International Staff

Offices:

1 Representation in Warsaw
1 Liaison office to Frontex

Financial information 28 February 2021

Financial requirements:
USD 0.86 M



UNHCR is grateful to the major donors of unearmarked contributions* to the 2021 global programmes (USD, as of February 2021):

Norway 80 M | Sweden 66.9 M | Netherlands 36.1 M | Denmark 34.6 M | Germany 22.1 M | Switzerland 16.4 M | Ireland 12.5 M | Belgium 11.9 M

*Unearmarked contributions allow UNHCR for critical flexibility in how best to reach populations of concern who are in the greatest need and at the greatest risk. Above are donors of USD 10 million or more.